

# Republic of Letters.

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pleasure in having it cultivated and embellished: the walks were gravelled, and bordered with orange trees; a great basin of white marble, in the middle of which a brazen lion vomited out great gushes of water; the beauty of the flowers, the variety of fruits, all these objects ravished Scipio; but he was in a particular manner enchanted with a long walk that led by a gentle descent all the way to a farmer's house, and was shaded by the interwoven boughs of the trees planted on each side. Here we stopped to make the eulogium of a place so proper for an asylum against the heat of the day; and sitting down at the root of a young elm, sleep easily surprised two merry boys, who had just made such a good dinner.

Two hours after, we started up, awakened by the noise of several shots, which seemed so near, that we were frightened. We got up in a hurry, and repaired to the farmer's house, where we found eight or ten peasants, all inhabitants of the hamlet, who had scoured and fired their fusils, to celebrate my arrival, of which they had got notice. The greatest part of them knew me, having seen me more than once at the castle, in the exercise of my stewardship. They no sooner perceived me, than they cried altogether, "Long life to our new master, who is welcome to Lirias!" Then they loaded their pieces, and regaled me with a general discharge. I received them as courteously as I could; preserving my gravity however, thinking it improper to be too familiar with them. I assured them of my protection, left twenty pistols among them, and this, I believe, they did not look upon as the most disagreeable part of my behavior. I afterwards left them at liberty to spend more powder, and retired with my secretary into the wood, where we strolled about till night, without being tired with beholding the groves; so charming is the first view of a new possession.

The cook, his assistant, and scullion, were not idle in the mean time; they were busy in preparing a repast, even superior to that which we had eaten; and we were actually astonished, when, returning into the same hall where we had dined, we saw them place upon the table a dish of roasted partridges, with a caviar of rabbit on one side, and on the other a capon in ragoût. The next course of dainties consisted of pigs' ears, pickled chicks, and cream chocolate. We drank plentifully of Lucena, and several sorts of excellent wine, and when we found we could drink no more without exposing our healths, we thought of going to bed. Then my lacques, taking lights, conducted me to the best apartment, where they were very officious in undressing me; but when they gave me my gown and night-cap, I dismissed them, saying, with a magisterial air, "Leave me, gentlemen; I have no farther occasion for you to-night."

I sent them all away; and keeping Scipio for a little conversation, asked what he thought of the treatment I received by order of the noblemen of Leyva. "In faith, (answered he,) I think you can't be treated better; I only wish that this may last." "I entertain no such wish, (I replied;) it will become me to let my benefactors be at such an expense on my account; this were to abuse their generosity; besides, I can't put up with servants who are paid by another; I should not believe myself in my own house. Neither am I come hither to live in a bustle; we have no occasion for such a number of domestics; we want no more than Bertrand, a cook, a scullion, and lacquey." Although my secretary would not have been sorry to live always at the expense of the governor of Valencia, he did not oppose my delicacy in this affair; but conforming himself to my sentiments, approved of the reform I intended to make. This being determined, he left me, and retired into his own apartment.

## CHAPTER IV.

*He departs for Valencia, to visit the noblemen of Leyva. His conversation with them, and the kind reception he met with from Seraphina.*

I UNDRESSED and went to bed; where, feeling no inclination to sleep, I abandoned myself to reflection. I represented to myself the friendship with which the noblemen of Leyva repaid my attachment to them; and, penetrated with those new marks of their affection, resolved to go, the very next day, and satisfy the longing impatience I had of seeing and thanking them for their favors. I likewise enjoyed, by anticipation, the pleasure of seeing Seraphina again; but that pleasure was not pure: I could not, without uneasiness, consider that I must, at the same time, support the looks of Dame Lorena Sephora, who, perhaps, remembering the adventure of a box on the ear, would not be overjoyed at sight of me. Fatigued with all these different ideas, I at length fell asleep, and did not wake till after sunrise.

I was soon a-foot; and, wholly engrossed by my intended journey, dressed myself in a hurry. Just as I had done adjusting myself, my secretary coming into my chamber, "Scipio, (said I,) you see me ready to set out for Valencia; I cannot make too much haste in going to salute the noblemen to whom I owe my small fortune; every moment that I delay to acquit myself of this duty, seems to accuse me of ingratitude. As for thee, my friend, I dispense with thy attendance;

stay here in my absence, and I will come back to thee in eight days." "Go, Sir, (he replied,) pay your respects to Don Alphonso and his father, who seem so sensible of your zeal and grateful for the services you have done them: persons of quality of that character are so rare, that they cannot be too much esteemed." I ordered Bertrand to get ready for our departure; and while he yoked the mules I drank my chocolate: then I got into my chaise, after having laid injunctions upon my people to regard my secretary as my other self, and to follow his orders as if they were my own.

I arrived at Valencia in less than four hours; and going straight to the governor's stables, there alighted, left my equipage, and was conducted to the apartment of that nobleman, who was then with his father Don Cesar. I opened the door, and entering without ceremony, accosted them in these words: "It does not become valets to send in their names to their masters: here is one of your old servants come to pay his respects." So saying, I would have kneeled before them; but they hindered me from so doing, and embraced me, one after another, with all the expressions of genuine affection. "Well, my dear Santillane, (said Don Alphonso,) have you been at Lirias to take possession of your estate?" "Yes, Signior, (I replied,) and I hope you will give me leave to restore it." "For what reason? (said he.) Is there any thing disagreeable about it that gives you disgust?" "Not in itself, (I resumed;) on the contrary, I am enchanted with it. All that displeases me in it is, to see cooks of an archbishop, with three times more servants than I want; which only serve to put you to an expense equally useless and considerable."

"If (said Don Cesar) you had accepted the annuity of two thousand ducats which we offered at Madrid, we should have been contented with giving you the house furnished as it is; but you know you refused the pension; and we thought we could do no less than make you some other recompense." "This is too much, (I replied;) your generosity ought to have been confined to the present of the estate, which is enough to crown my wishes. But, exclusive of that, I declare that these people incommode and plague me. In a word, my lords, take back your estate, or allow me to enjoy it according to my own desire." I pronounced these last words with such a determined air, that the father and son, who did not at all intend to lay me under any constraint, promised, at length, that I should live as I pleased in my own house.

I thanked them for having granted me that liberty, without which I could not be happy; when Don Alphonso interrupted me, saying, "My dear Gil Blas, I will introduce you to a lady who will be overjoyed to see you." With these words, he took me by the hand, and led me into the apartment of Seraphina, who screamed with joy when she saw me. "Madam, (said the governor,) I believe the arrival of our friend Santillane at Valencia is as agreeable to you as to me." "That is what he ought to be convinced of, (answered she;) time has not made me lose the remembrance of the service he did me: and to the gratitude I myself owe him, I add that which I ought to have on your account." I told the lady governor that I was but too well required for the danger I had shared with her deliverers, in exposing my life for her sake. After many mutual compliments, Don Alphonso brought me back from Seraphina's apartment; and we rejoined Don Cesar, whom we found in a hall with several persons of quality, who came thither to dinner.

All these gentlemen saluted me with great politeness; and were the more civil to me, because Don Cesar had told them that I was once one of the Duke of Lerma's principal secretaries. Perhaps, likewise, the greatest part of them knew it was by my credit that Don Alphonso had obtained the government of Valencia; for every thing is known. Be that as it will, when we were at table, the new cardinal was the whole subject of the discourse. Some gave, or affected to give, him great commendation; while others seasoned their praise with some severe sneers. From hence I concluded that they wanted I should enlarge upon my eminence, and make them merry at his expense. I had some inclination to disclose my sentiments of him; but I restrained my tongue; and this silence made me pass, in the opinion of the company, for a man of great discretion.

After dinner, the guests retired to take their siestas at their own homes: Don Cesar and his son, seized with the same desire, shut themselves up in their apartments; and I, impatient to see a city, the beauty of which I had heard so much extolled, went out of the governor's palace, with a design to stroll through the streets. At the gate, I met a man, who accosted me in these words: "Signior de Santillane, give me leave to salute you." When I asked who he was: "I am now (said he) Don Cesar's valet de chambre; but was one of his lacques while you was his steward: I made my court to you every morning, because you was very kind to me; and I informed you of every thing that happened in the house. Don't you remember, that I one day gave you notice, that the surgeon of the village of Leyva was privately admitted into the chamber of Dame Lorena Sephora?" "I have not forgot it, (I replied;) but a-propos, what is become of that duenna?" "Alas! (said he,) after your departure the poor creature pined away, and died, more regretted by Seraphina

than by Don Alphonso, who seemed very little afflicted at her death."

Don Cesar's valet de chambre having thus informed me of Sephora's melancholy end, made an apology for having stopped me; and I continued my walk, sighing at the remembrance of that unfortunate duenna, and lamenting her fate, which I imputed to myself; without considering that it was more owing to her own cancer than to my cruelty.

I observed, with pleasure, all that was worth seeing in this city: the marble palace of the archbishop agreeably entertained my view, as well as the fine porticos of the exchange; but a large house, which I discerned at a distance, and which I saw a great number of people enter, attracted my attention. I approached it, in order to know the reason of such a great concourse of men and women; and was soon satisfied when I read these words, written in golden letters, on a stone of black marble placed over the gate, *La posada de los representantes*. And the players advertised in their bill, that they would that day, for the first time, act a new tragedy composed by Don Gabriel Triquero.

## CHAPTER V.

*Gil Blas goes to the play, where he sees a new tragedy acted. The success of that performance, with the public taste of Valencia.*

I STOPPED some minutes at the door, to view the people who went in; and observed, that they consisted of all ranks. I saw cavaliers of a genteel mien, and richly dressed, and some figures as ordinary as the clothes they wore. I perceived ladies of quality alight from their coaches, and go to the boxes, which they had ordered to be bespoke; and female adventurers go in with a view of alluring cullees. This concourse of all sorts of spectators made me desirous of increasing the number. Just as I was going to take a ticket, the governor and his lady arriving, discerned me in the crowd; and ordering me to be called, carried me into their box, where I placed myself behind them so as to be able to speak to both with ease. I found the house full of people from top to bottom, the pit very much thronged, and the stage loaded with knights of the three military orders. "Here is (said I to Don Alphonso) a very numerous assembly." "You must not be surprised at that, (answered he;) the tragedy to be represented is the composition of Don Gabriel Triquero, surnamed the medish poet. As soon as the play-bills advertise a new thing written by that author, the whole city of Valencia is in a flutter: the men as well as the women talk of nothing but this piece: all the boxes are bespoke; and it being the first day of its representation, people are squeezed to death, endeavoring to enter; although every place is double filled, except the pit, which they dare not disoblige." "Such madness! (said I to the governor;) that eager curiosity of the public, that furious impatience to see every new production of Gabriel, gives me a high idea of the poet's genius."

In this part of our conversation, the actors appeared; and we left off speaking immediately, in order to listen with attention. The applause began with the prologue; every verse was attended with a brouhaha; and at the end of each act, there was such a clapping of hands, that one would have thought the house was falling. After the performance, they showed me the author, who went from box to box, modestly presenting his head for the laurels with which the gentlemen and ladies prepared to crown him.

We returned to the governor's palace, where three or four knights arrived in a little time: thither also came two old authors, esteemed in their way, with a gentleman of Madrid, of understanding and taste. As they had all been at the play, the whole conversation at supper turned upon the new piece. "Gentlemen, (said a knight of St. Jago,) what is your opinion of this tragedy? Is it not what you call a finished work? Sublime thoughts, tender sentiments, manly versification, deficient in nothing: in a word, it is a poem adapted to people of taste." "I believe nobody can be of a contrary opinion, (said the knight of Alcantara;) the piece is full of strokes that Apollo seems to have dictated, and of situations conceived with infinite art. I appeal to this gentleman, (added he, addressing himself to the Castilian;) he seems to be a connoisseur, and I'll wager he is of my sentiment." "Don't waver, chevalier, (answered the gentleman, with a sarcastic smile,) we do not decide so hastily at Madrid: far from judging a piece at its first representation, we distrust its beauties while they are in the mouths of the actors: and how well soever we may be affected to the author, suspend our judgment until we have read it: and, truly, it does not always give us the same pleasure upon paper that we received from it on the stage." We scrupulously examine a poem before we esteem it, without being dazzled by the author's reputation, how great soever it may be. When Lope de Vega himself, and Calderon, produced new pieces,

\* The play-house.

† Brouhaha! a noise of applause.

‡ Don Pedro Calderon de la Barra, knight of the order of St. Jago, and canon of Toledo; famous for the excellent comedies he has written.

\* A cive is sauce made of the entrails of a hare or rabbit.

they found in their admirers severe judges, who would not raise them to the highest point of glory, until they judged them worthy of that elevation."

"Zooks! (cried the knight of St. Jago,) we are not so fearful as you: we don't wait until a piece is printed, but in the first representation fix its value: there is not even occasion for our listening to it with great attention; if we know it to be a production of Don Gabriel, that is enough to convince us that it is without blemish. The works of that poet ought to serve us as an epocha for the birth of taste: your Lopes and Calderona were but apprentices in comparison of this great master of the stage." The gentleman, who looked upon Lopes and Calderona as the Spanish Sophocles and Euripides, was shocked at this rash assertion. "Such dramatic sacrifice! (cried he.) Since you oblige me, gentlemen, to judge, like you, from a first representation, I must tell you that I am not at all satisfied with this new tragedy of your Don Gabriel: it is stuffed with strokes more shining than solid; three parts in four of the verse are bad, or misrhythmed; the characters ill conceived and ill supported; and the sentiments are often very obscure."

The two authors who were at table, and who, through a reserve as commendable as rare, had said nothing for fear of being suspected of jealousy, could not help applauding the gentleman's sentiments with their eyes; which made me guess that their silence was not so much owing to the perfection of the work, as to other prudential reasons. As for the knights, they began again to praise Don Gabriel, whom they even placed among the gods. This extravagant apotheosis, and blind idolatry, made the Castilian lose all patience: he lifted up his hands to heaven, and all of a sudden exclaimed, in a fit of enthusiasm, "O divine Lope de Vega! rare and sublime genius, who hast left an immense space between thee and all the Gabriels who attempt to reach thy excellence; and you, puffy Calderona! whose elegant softness, purged of epic stiffness, is inimitable; do not fear that your altars will be demolished by this new pupil of the Muses, who will be very lucky if posterity, which you will delight, as you delight the present age, shall hear his name mentioned."

This pleasant apostrophe, which nobody expected, raised the laugh of the whole company, which got up from table and parted. I was conducted, by Don Alphonso's order, into an apartment prepared for me; there I found a good bed, in which my worship went to sleep, deploring (like the Castilian gentleman) the injustice which ignorant people did to Lopes and Calderona.

#### CHAPTER VI.

*Gil Blas walking through the streets of Valencia, meets a friar whom he thinks he knows. An account of that friar.*

As I had not seen the whole city in my first excursion, I went out next day with an intention to take another walk; and perceived in the street a Carthusian friar, who, doubtless, was going to perform the affairs of his community. He walked with downcast eyes, and so devout an air, that he attracted the notice of every body. As he passed by me, I looked at him with attention, and thought I saw in him the very person of Don Raphael, the adventurer who maintains such an honorable place in the first part of my memoirs.

I was so much astonished, so struck with this meeting, that, instead of accosting the monk, I stood immovable some minutes; during which he was gone a good way from me. "Just heaven! (said I,) were ever two faces more alike! What must I think of this affair? Can it be Raphael indeed; or can I doubt that it is he?" I was too curious to know the truth, to remain long where I was. I asked the way to the monastery of the Carthusians, whither I instantly repaired, in hopes of seeing my man again when he should return; and firmly resolved to stop and speak with him. I had no occasion to wait for this: when I came to the gate of the convent, another face of my acquaintance turned my doubts into certainty: I recollected in the porter my old valet Ambrose de Lamela.

We were equally surprised to find one another in that place. "Don't I dream, (said I, saluting him;) is it actually one of my friends whom I behold?" He could not recollect me at first, or feigned himself ignorant of my features; but considering that this feint was useless, he affected the air of a person who remembers a thing all of a sudden: "Ah! Signior Gil Blas! (cried he,) forgive my want of memory. Since I have lived in this holy place, and applied myself to fulfil the duties prescribed by our rules, I lose insensibly the remembrance of what I have seen in the world."

"I am sincerely rejoiced (said I) to see you, after an absence of ten years, in such a reverend dress." "And I (he replied) am ashamed to appear in it before a person who has been witness of the guilty life I led. This dress incessantly upbraids me. Alas! (added he, sighing profoundly,) to be worthy of wearing it, I ought to have lived always in innocence." "By this discourse, with which I am charmed, (I resumed,) my dear brother, one may see that you have been touched by the finger of the Lord. I repeat the assurance of my joy at the occasion; and long earnestly to hear in what miraculous manner you and Don Raphael have entered into the right way; for I am persuaded that it is he whom I just now met in the Carthusian habit. I am sorry that I did not stop him in the street, and speak to him; and I wait here for his return, in order to repair my neglect."

"You are not mistaken, (said Lamela to me;) it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw; and as to the detail you desire, here it is. After we parted from you, near Segorba, the son of Lucinda and I took the road to Valencia, with a design of playing some new trick of our profession in that city. One day, by accident, we went into the church of the Carthusians, while the monks were singing psalms in the choir. We considered them attentively, and experienced, that even

the wicked cannot help honoring virtue. We admired the fervor with which they prayed to God, their immortal air, their minds detached from the pleasures of the age, as well as the serenity that reigned in their countenances, and so well expressed the repose of their consciences.

"While we made these observations, we fell into a reverie, that became very salutary unto us. We compared our morals with those of the good monks, and the difference which we found filled us with sorrow and disquiet. 'Lamela, (said Don Raphael to me, when we came out of the church,) how art thou affected with what we have seen? for my part, I cannot conceal from thee the anxiety of my mind. I am agitated by emotions hitherto unknown to me, and for the first time of my life, my conscience upbraids me with my iniquity.' 'I am in the self-same disposition, (answered I:) the evil actions which I have committed, at this instant rise up against me; and my heart, which was before hardened against repentance, is now torn with remorse.' 'Ah! dear Ambrose! (resumed my comrade,) we are two strayed sheep whom the heavenly Father, through pity, intends to bring back into the fold. It is he, my child, it is he, who calls to us; let us not be deaf to his voice. Let us renounce cheating, quit the libertinism in which we live, and begin from this very day to labor seriously in the great work of our salvation. We must spend the rest of our days in this convent, and consecrate them to piety and penitence.'

"I applauded Raphael's sentiments, (continued brother Ambrose,) and we formed the generous resolution of becoming Carthusians. To put this in execution, we addressed ourselves to the father prior, who no sooner understood our design, than, in order to prove our vocation, he accommodated us with cells, and we were treated like monks during a whole year. We followed the rules with such exactness and constancy, that we were received among the novices. We were so well satisfied with our situation, and so full of ardor, that we courageously underwent the toils of the novitiate; we then professed: after which, Don Raphael appearing endued with a genius for business, was chosen assistant to an old father, who was at that time solicitor. The son of Lucinda would have rather spent his whole time in prayer, but he was obliged to sacrifice his inclination to the good of the convent. He acquired such a perfect knowledge of the interests of the house, that he was deemed capable of filling the place of the old solicitor, who died three years after. Don Raphael actually exercises that employment at present, and acquires himself in it to the great satisfaction of all our fathers, who praise his conduct very much in the administration of his temporalities. What is very surprising is, that, in spite of the care of collecting our revenues, with which he is invested, he seems engrossed by eternity alone. And when his business leaves him a moment to himself, he employs it in the most profound meditation. In a word, he is one of the holiest monks in our monastery."

In this place I interrupted Lamela with a transport of joy, that I expressed at the sight of Raphael, who arrived. "There, (cried I,) there is the holy solicitor for whom I waited so impatiently." At the same time I ran up and embraced him. He received my salutation with a good grace; and, without discovering the least surprise at meeting, said to me, with a voice full of sweetness, "God be praised, Signior de Santillane, God be praised for the pleasure I have in seeing you!" "Truly, (I replied,) my dear Raphael, I share as much as possible in your happiness. Brother Ambrose has recounted to me the history of your conversion, and I was charmed with the narration. What advantage have you both, my friends, in being able to flatter yourselves that you are of the small number of the elect, who will one day enjoy eternal felicity?"

"Two wretches such as we are (resumed the son of Lucinda, with an air of great humility) ought not to conceive such hopes; but the repentance of sinners makes them find favor with the Father of mercy. And you, Signior Gil Blas, (added he,) don't you also think of deserving pardon for the crimes you have committed? What business brings you to Valencia? Don't you unhappily fill some dangerous employment in this place?" "No, thank God, (I replied,) since I quitted the court, I have led the life of an honest man. Sometimes at an estate which I have some leagues from hence, I enjoy the pleasure of the country; and sometimes I come to make merry with the governor of Valencia, who is my friend, and one whom you both know perfectly well."

Then I recounted the history of Don Alphonso de Leyva, to which they listened with attention; and when I told them I had carried from that nobleman to Samuel Simon the three thousand ducats which we had stolen from him, Lamela interrupted me, and addressing himself to Raphael, "Father Hilary, (said he,) at that rate the merchant has no cause to complain of a robbery for which he has received restitution with usury, and we ought to have quiet consciences on that article." "Really, (said the solicitor,) brother Ambrose and I, before we entered this convent, sent privately fifteen hundred ducats to Samuel Simon, by a worthy clergyman who took the trouble of going to Xelva in order to make that restitution: so much the worse for Samuel, if he was capable of touching that sum, after having been reimbursed of the whole by Signior de Santillane." "But (said I to them) are you sure that your fifteen hundred ducats were faithfully remitted to him?" "Questionless, (cried Don Raphael;) I will answer for the clergyman's integrity as much as for my own." "And I will join in the security, (said Lamela;) he is a holy priest, used to these sort of commissions, and has had, for things deposited in his hands, two or three lawsuits, which he gained with costs."

Our conversation lasted some time longer; then we parted, they exhorting me to have always the fear of the Lord before my eyes, and I recommended myself to their devout prayers. Going straight to Don Alphonso, "You can't guess

(said I to him) with whom I have had a long conversation. I have just parted with two venerable Carthusians of your acquaintance; one called Father Hilary, and the other brother Ambrose." "You are mistaken, (answered Don Alphonso,) I know not one Carthusian." "Pardon me, (I replied,) you saw at Xelva Brother Ambrose commissary, and Father Hilary secretary to the inquisition." "Good heaven! (cried the governor with surprise,) is it possible that Raphael and Lamela are become Carthusians?" "Yes, indeed, (said I,) they have been professed monks some years. The first is solicitor, and the other porter of the convent."

Don Cesar's son mused some minutes, then shaking his head, "Mr. Commissary of the inquisition and his secretary, (said he,) are, in my opinion, bent upon playing some new farce here." "You are prejudiced against them, (answered I.) For my own part, having conversed with them, I judge more favorably of their intention. It is true we cannot drive into the heart; but, in all appearance, they are two converted sinners." "That may be, (resumed Don Alphonso;) there have been many libertines, who, after having scandalized the world by their irregularities, shut themselves up in cloisters to perform a rigorous penance; and I wish our two monks may be of that sort." "Why should they not? (said I,) they have voluntarily embraced a monastic life, and have already lived a long time like good friars." "You may say what you please, (replied the governor;) I don't like that the convent's cash should be in the hands of this said Father Hilary, whose integrity I cannot help distrusting. When I remember that fine detail he gave us of his adventures, I tremble for the Carthusians. I would willingly believe with you, that he has taken the habit from a very pious motive, but the sight of the cash may awake his cupidity. A reformed drunkard should never be left in a cellar."

The suspicion of Don Alphonso was fully justified in a few days. Father Solicitor and Brother Porter disappeared with the cash. This piece of news, which was immediately spread all over the city, afforded great mirth to the wits, who always rejoice at the misfortunes which happen to endowed monks. As for the governor and me, we pitied the Carthusians, without boasting of our acquaintance with the two apostles.

#### CHAPTER VII.

*Gil Blas returns to his castle of Lirias. Hears an agreeable piece of news from Scipio; and makes a reform in his house-keeping.*

I SPENT eight days at Valencia in high taste, living among counts and marquises. Shows, balls, concerts, entertainments, conversations with the ladies, and other amusements, I enjoyed by the favor of the governor and his lady, to whom I paid my court so successfully, that when I set out for Lirias they were sorry to part with me. They even obliged me to promise that I would divide my time between them and my solitude; and it was agreed that I should live at Valencia in the winter, and spend the summer at my own house. This convention being made, my benefactors gave me liberty to go and enjoy their favors.

Scipio, who impatiently expected my return, was overjoyed at seeing me; and I redoubled his pleasure by a faithful report of my journey. "Well, my friend, (said I to him afterwards,) how didst thou spend the day in my absence? didst thou divert thyself agreeably?" "As well (answered he) as a servant could, to whom nothing is so dear as the presence of his master. I have walked all over our small territories. Sometimes seated on the brink of that fountain which is in our wood, I took pleasure in contemplating the beauty of its waters, which are as pure as those of the sacred fountain that makes the vast forest of Albuna echo with its noise; and sometimes, stretched at the root of a tree, heard the linnets and the nightingales tune their song. In short, I have hunted, I have fished; and, what gave me more satisfaction than all other amusements, I have read several books, as useful as entertaining."

I interrupted my secretary with precipitation, to ask where he found these books. "I found them (said he) in a handsome library, which Mr. Joachim showed me in this castle." "Ha! in what part (said I) can this pretended library be? Did we not visit the whole house on the first day of our arrival?" "So you imagined, (answered he;) but you must know we surveyed three pavilions only and forgot the fourth, where Don Cesar, when he came to Lirias, usually employed a part of his time in reading. There are in this library exceeding good books left for you, as an assured entertainment, when our gardens, strip of their flowers, and our woods of their leaves, shall have nothing left to amuse us. The nobleman of Leyva have not done things by halves, but provided food for the mind as well as for the body."

Truly rejoiced at this piece of news, I followed him into the fourth pavilion, which presented a very agreeable scene to my view. I beheld a chamber, which from that hour I destined to be my apartment as it had been Don Cesar's. The bed of that nobleman was still there, together with all the rest of the furniture: that is, a tapestry, with figures representing the rape of the Sabine women. From this room I went into a closet, surrounded with low presses filled with books, over which appeared the portraits of all our kings. There were also hard by, a window, from whence we had a view of a most delightful country, an ebony bureau standing before a large sofa, covered with black maroon. But I bestowed my chief attention upon the library, which was composed of philosophy, poetry, history, and a great number of romances on the subject of knight-errantry. I concluded that Don Cesar loved this last kind of writing, since he had made such plentiful provision of it. I must confess, to my shame, that I was no less pleased with these productions, notwithstanding all the extravagancies with which they are interwoven; whether it was owing to my being at that time



no very considerate reader, or that Spaniards in general are too much captivated by the marvellous; I will say nevertheless, that I took more pleasure in sprightly books than morality; and that Lucian, Horace, and Erasmus, became my favorite authors.

"Friend, (said I to Scipio, when I had surveyed my library, here is amusement indeed; but our present business is to retrench our house-keeping." "I will spare you that task, (answered he.) During your absence I have studied your people, and now may boast of knowing them perfectly well. Let us begin with Mr. Joachim, who (I believe) is a complete rogue, and I don't doubt that he was turned out of the archbishop's service for having committed arithmetical blunders in his accounts. Nevertheless, we must keep him for two reasons: the first is, because he is a good cook; and the second, because I shall always have an eye over him: I will be a spy upon his actions, and he must be as cunning as the devil if he is able to deceive me. I have already told him that you intend to dismiss three fourths of your servants, a piece of news that gave him some pain: and he assured me, that feeling an inclination to serve you, he would, rather than leave the house, be contented with the half of his present wages; a circumstance which makes me suspect that there is some girl in the village from whom he would not willingly remove. As for the cook's assistant, (added he,) he is a drunkard, and the porter an insolent fellow, for whom we have not the least occasion, any more than for the fowler; I can easily fill up the place of this last, as I will show you tomorrow, since we have plenty of fowls, powder and shot. With regard to the lacques, there is one of them from Arragon, seemingly a good lad, him we will keep; the rest are such rogues, that I would not advise you to retain them, even if you wanted a hundred valets.

Having maturely deliberated on this affair, we resolved to keep the cook, scullion, Arragonian footman, and rid ourselves honorably of the rest. This was executed that very day, by means of some pistols which Scipio took from our strong box, and divided among them by my order. When we had made this reformation, we established a certain order in the house, regulated the office of each domestic, and began to live at our own expense. I would have been contented with a frugal ordinary; but my secretary, who loved ragouts and dainties, was not the man to leave Mr. Joachim's skill unemployed. He kept him so well at work, that our dinners and suppers might have served a company of Bernadine monks.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The amours of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia.*

Two days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, Basil the laborer, my farmer, came in the morning to ask leave to present Antonia, his daughter, who (he said) wanted to have the honor of saluting her new master. I told him that it would give me great pleasure; upon which he went out, and returned soon after with the fair Antonia. I think I may give that epithet to a maid of sixteen or eighteen years, who, with the most regular features, possessed the fairest complexion and finest eyes in the world. Though she was clad in a stuff gown, her rich air, majestic port, and graces that do not always accompany youth, dignified the simplicity of her dress. She wore no cap on her head, her hair being tied up behind with a knot of flowers, in the manner of the Lacedaemonian women. When she entered my chamber, I was as much struck with her beauty as the knights of Charlemagne's court with the charms of Angelica. Instead of receiving Antonia with ease, and saying kind things to her; instead of congratulating the father on his happiness in having such a charming daughter, I stood confounded, astonished, and mute. Scipio, who perceived my disorder, spoke in my room, and was at the expense of those praises which I owed to that lovely creature. As for her part, not at all dazzled by my figure, in my morning gown and cap, she saluted me without any concern, and made me a compliment, which, though common, enchanted my affection. In the mean time, while my secretary, Basil, and his daughter, were employed in mutual civilities, I recollected myself; and to make amends for the stupid silence I had hitherto kept, passed from one extreme to another, launched out into gallant discourse, and spoke with so much vivacity, that I alarmed Basil, who, looking upon me already as a man who would put every thing in practice to seduce Antonia, went out of my apartment with her in a hurry, resolved perhaps to withdraw her from my eyes for ever.

Scipio, seeing himself alone with me, said with a smile, "Here is another resource against the tedious hours. I did not know that your farmer had such a handsome daughter, having never before seen her, though I have been twice at her father's house: he must be at great pains to conceal her; and I commend his care. Egad, she's a delicate morsel. But (added he) I believe I need not say so to you, who were dazzled by her at first sight." "I don't deny it, (answered I.) Ah! my child, I thought I saw a celestial substance. She inflamed me all of a sudden, and pierced my heart with an arrow swift as lightning."

"I am ravished (replied my secretary) to learn that you are at last in love. You wanted a mistress to make you enjoy perfect happiness in your solitude. Thank heaven, you have now all sorts of conveniences. I know (continued he) that we shall have some difficulty in deceiving the vigilance of Basil; but leave that to me: I undertake in three days to procure for you a private interview with Antonia." "Mr. Scipio, (said I,) perhaps you might not be able to keep your promise; but this is not what I am curious to try. I have no intention to tempt the virtue of that girl, who seems to deserve that I should entertain other sentiments of her. Wherefore, far from exacting of your zeal that you should assist me

in dishonoring her, I am resolved, by your mediation, to espouse her, provided her heart is not engaged to another."

"I did not expect (said he) to see you take such a sudden resolution to marry. Many country gentlemen in your place would not deal so honorably; they would never entertain legitimate views with regard to Antonia, until they had tried others to no purpose. But, however, (added he,) don't imagine that I condemn your love, and seek to dissuade you from your design. Your farmer's daughter deserves the honor you intend for her, if she can bestow upon you a heart unengaged, and sensible of your generosity. This I must inform myself of to-day, in a conversation with the father, and perhaps with herself."

My confidant, who was a punctual man in performing his promises, went privately to visit Basil, and in the evening came to me in my closet, where I waited with impatience mingled with fear. Drawing a good omen from his cheerful look, "If I may believe (said I) that smile on my face, thou comest to signify that I shall soon enjoy my wish." "Yes, my dear master, (he replied,) every thing is propitious to you. I have had a conversation with Basil and his daughter, to whom I declared your intention. The father is overjoyed to hear you design to be his son-in-law; and I can assure you, that you are very much to Antonia's taste." "O heaven! (cried I, in a transport of joy) what! am I so happy as to be agreeable to that lovely creature?" "Doubtless, (he resumed,) she already loves you. I have not indeed drawn that confession from her mouth; but I am convinced of her passion, by the gaiety she discovered when she understood your design. Nevertheless (added he) you have a rival." "A rival? (cried I, changing color.) You need not be much alarmed, (said he:) that rival will not rob you of the heart of your mistress; he is no other than Mr. Joachim, your cook." "Ah! the hang dog! (said I, bursting into a fit of laughter,) this was his reason for showing such reluctance to quit my service." "The very same, (answered Scipio.) He some days ago demanded Antonia in marriage, and met with a polite refusal." "With deference to thy better advice (I resumed), methinks it will be proper to rid ourselves of the rogue before he can get notice that I intend to marry Basil's daughter; a cook, thou knowest, is a dangerous rival." "You are in the right, (replied my confidant;) we must clear the house of him. I will give him his leave to-morrow morning before he begins to work, and then you shall have nothing to fear either from his saute or his love. I am sorry, however, to lose such an excellent cook; but I sacrifice my palate to your safety." "Thou needest not regret him so much, (said I:) the loss is irreparable: I will send to Valencia for a cook as good as he." And indeed I wrote immediately to Don Alphonso, that I had occasion for a cook; and the very next day he sent one who consoled Scipio at once.

Although the zealous secretary had told me that he perceived Antonia was pleased in her heart with the conquest which she had made of her master, I durst not depend upon his report, being apprehensive that he might have been deceived by false appearances. To be more sure of the matter, I resolved to speak in person to the fair Antonia; and repairing to Basil's house, confirmed what my ambassador had told him. That honest peasant, a man of frankness and simplicity, having heard my desire, assured me that he would bestow his daughter upon me with the utmost satisfaction; "but (added he) don't think that it is on account of your being lord of the manor. Were you still no more than the steward of Don Cesar and Don Alphonso, I would prefer you to all the other suitors who present themselves. I have always had a regard for you; and what gives me the most concern is, that Antonia cannot bring you a large fortune." "I ask nothing with her, (said I:) her person is all the wealth to which I aspire." "Your most humble servant! (cried he:) that is not my intention: I am not such a beggar as to marry my daughter in that manner. Basil de Buenotriga is in a condition, thank God, to give her a dowry; and for every dinner you bestow upon her, she shall afford a supper to you. In a word, the rent of your estate, which is but five hundred ducats, shall amount to a thousand by virtue of this marriage."

"You shall do in that as you please, my dear Basil, (I replied;) we shall have no disputes about interest; and now that we are agreed, the sole business is to obtain the consent of your daughter." "You have mine, (said he,) and that is enough." "Not altogether (answered I); if yours is necessary, her's is so too." "Her's depends upon me, (said he:) I would fain see her refuse!" "Antonia, (I resumed,) submissive to paternal authority, is ready, without doubt, to obey you implicitly; but I don't know if she can do it upon this occasion without reluctance: and if she can't, I should never be consoled for having made her unhappy; in short, it is not enough for me to obtain her hand of you, unless her heart goes to the bargain." "By'r lady! (said Basil,) I don't understand all this philosophy: speak yourself to Antonia, and you shall see, if I am not mistaken, that she desires no better than to be your wife." So saying, he called his daughter, and left me alone with her for a minute or two.

That I might enjoy the precious opportunity, I came to the point at once. "Fair Antonia (said I), determine my fate. Although I have your father's consent, don't think that I intend to avail myself of it, in doing violence to your inclination. Charming as it is, I renounce the possession of you, if you say that I must owe it to your obedience only." "That is what I will not say, (answered she:) your addresses are too agreeable to give me pain; and, instead of murmuring, I approve of my father's choice. I don't know (continued she) whether I do well or ill in talking thus; but if you was disagreeable to me, I should be frank enough to own it; why then may I not say the contrary with the same freedom?"

At these words, which I could not hear without being charmed, I knelt before Antonia, and, in the excess of my

joy, seizing one of her fair hands, kissed it with the utmost tenderness and passion. "My dear Antonia, (said I,) I am enchanted with your frankness; continue the same unconstrained behavior; and as you speak to your husband, disclose your whole soul to his view. May I then flatter myself that you will be pleased to see your fortune joined to mine?" Basil coming in at that instant, hindered me from proceeding. Impatient to know his daughter's answer, and ready to grumble, had she shown the least aversion for me, "Well, (said he,) are you satisfied with Antonia?" "I am so well satisfied with her (answered I), that I will this very moment go and make preparations for my marriage." So saying, I took my leave of the father and daughter, to go and consult with my secretary on that subject.

## CHAPTER IX.

*The manner in which the nuptials of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia were celebrated; and the rejoicings with which they were attended.*

ALTHOUGH I was under no necessity of obtaining the permission of the noblemen of Leyva, Scipio and I concluded that we could not in honor omit imparting to them my design of marrying Basil's daughter, and of asking their consent out of good manners.

I set out immediately for Valencia, where they were as much surprised to see me, as to hear the cause of my journey. Don Cesar and his son having seen Antonia more than once, congratulated me on my choice. Don Cesar, especially, complimented me upon it with such vivacity, that if I had not believed him to be a man quite weaned from certain amusements, I should have suspected that he had gone sometimes to Lirias, to see his farmer's daughter, rather than to visit his own house. Seraphina, after having assured me that she would always bear a large part in what should concern me, said she had heard a very good character of Antonia: "But (added she with a satirical look, as if she reproached me with the indifference with which I repaid Seraphina's passion), if I had not heard her beauty deluged, I should depend upon your taste, the delicacy of which I know."

Don Cesar and his son not only approved of my marriage, but declared that they would defray the whole expense of it. "Go back to Lirias, (said they,) and make yourself easy until you hear from us. Make no preparation for your nuptials, but leave that to our care." In compliance with their desire, I returned to my house, and making Basil and his daughter acquainted with the intention of our patrons, we waited their order as patiently as we could. During eight days, however, we received none; but to make amends, on the ninth, a coach and four arrived full of mantua-makers, and rich stuffs for the bride's clothes, and escorted by several men in livery, mounted on mules. One of them brought a letter for me, from Don Alphonso, importing that he would be at Lirias next day, with his father and spouse, and that the ceremony of my marriage should be celebrated on the day following, by the grand vicar of Valencia. Accordingly, Don Cesar, his son, and Seraphina, did not fail to come with that clergyman, all four together in a coach and six, preceded by another drawn by four, in which were Seraphina's women, and attended by the governor's guards.

My lady governess was scarce arrived, when she expressed the utmost impatience to see Antonia, who, on her part, no sooner understood that Seraphina was alighted, than she ran to salute her, and kissed her hand with such a good grace, that all the company admired her politeness. "Well, Madam, (said Don Cesar to his daughter-in-law,) what do you think of Antonia? Could Santillana have made a better choice?" "No, indeed, (replied Seraphina,) they are worthy of each other, and I don't doubt that their union will be perfectly happy." In short, every one praised the bride; and if she was much applauded in her country garb, every body was charmed with her when she appeared in a richer dress. Her air was so noble, and her deportment so easy, that one would have thought she had never wore any other.

The moment being arrived in which propitious Hymen was to join my fate to hers, Don Alphonso, taking me by the hand, led me to the altar, while Seraphina did the same honor to the bride. In this order we repaired to the village chapel, where the vicar attended to marry us; and that ceremony was performed amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants of Lirias, and all the rich farmers in the neighborhood, whom Basil had invited to Antonia's wedding, with their daughters dressed in ribbons and flowers, holding tapers in their hands. We then returned to my house, where, by the care of Scipio, who was contriver of the feast, we found three tables covered, one for the noblemen, another for their attendants, and the third, which was the largest, for the rest of the guests. Antonia sat at the first, by desire of the lady governess; I did the honors of the second, and Basil took care of the third. As for Scipio, he did not sit, but went from one table to another, employing himself in serving and satisfying every individual.

As the entertainment was prepared by the governor's cooks, it could not fail of being complete in all its parts. The good wines, of which Mr. Joachim had made ample provision, were drunk with profusion; the guests began to wax warm, and mirth and jollity reigned; when we were, all of a sudden, interrupted by an incident that alarmed me. My secretary being in the hall, where I sat at table with the principal officers of Don Alphonso, and Seraphina's women, fell down upon the floor, without sense or motion. I ran to his assistance, and while I was busied in bringing him to himself again, one of the women fainted away. All the company concluded that there must be some mystery in this double swooning, as it actually concealed one, which in a little time was explained; for, soon after, Scipio recovered his spirits,

and said to me, softly, "Why should the happiest of your days be the most disagreeable of mine? It is impossible for me to shun his destiny, (added he:) I have found my wife in the person of one of Scraphina's maids."

"What do I hear? (cried I,) that is not possible! What! art thou the husband of the lady who was taken ill at the same time with thee?" "Yes, Sir, (he replied,) I am her husband; and fortune, I swear, could not play me a more villainous trick than that of bringing her to my view." "I don't know, my friend, (said I,) what reason thou hast to complain of thy wife; but, whatever cause she may have given thee, pray constrain thyself; if thou lovest me, do not disturb this entertainment by showing thy resentment." "You shall be satisfied with my behavior, (replied Scipio,) and see whether or not I can dissemble."

So saying, he went up to his wife, who, by the assistance of her companions, was also recovered, and embracing her with the appearance of as much passion as if he had been ravished to see her again: "Ah! my dear Beatrice, (said he,) heaven unites us again, after ten years of separation; O happy moment for me!" "I don't know, (answered his wife) whether or not you really feel any joy in meeting me here; but this I am certain of, I gave you no just cause to leave me. What! you found me one night with Signior Don Ferdinand de Leyva, who was in love with my mistress Julia, and whose passion I assisted; and you took it in your head that I listened to him at the expense of your and my honor: thereupon jealousy turned your brain; you quitted Toledo, and fled from me as from a monster, without deigning to come to an explanation! Which of us two, if you please, has the most reason to complain?" "You, to be sure," (replied Scipio.) "Yes, doubtless, (said she.) Don Ferdinand, soon after your departure from Toledo, married Julia, with whom I staid as long as she lived; and since we were robbed of her by an untimely death, I have been in the service of my lady her sister, who, as well as her women, can answer for the purity of my morals."

My secretary, at this discourse, the falsity of which he could not prove, behaved as became him. "Once more (said he to his wife) I own my fault, and ask pardon before this honorable assembly." Then I, interceding for him, begged that Beatrice would forget what was past; assuring her, that, for the future, her husband's sole study should be to give her satisfaction. She yielded to my entreaty, and the whole company applauded their re-union; for the better celebration of which they were made to sit by one another. Their health was toasted: every body complimented them, and the feast seemed to have been made rather on account of their reconciliation than of my nuptials.

The third table was the first forsaken. The young peasants got up to dance with the country maids, who, by the noise of their tabors, soon brought the company from the other rooms, and inspired them with the desire of following their example. Every body was now in motion: the governor's officers began to dance with the attendants of my lady governess; the noblemen themselves mingled in the diversion. Don Alphonso danced a saraband with Scraphina. Don Cesar performed with Antonia, who came afterwards and took me out, acquitting herself pretty well, considering that she had only received a few lessons in the house of a relation, who was the wife of a citizen of Albarazin. As for me, who had learned in the house of the Marchioness of Chaves, the assembly looked upon me as a great dancer. With regard to Beatrice and Scipio, they preferred a private conversation to dancing, and gave each other an account of what had happened to them since their parting; but they were interrupted by Scraphina, who, being informed of their meeting, sent for them to express her joy at their reconciliation. "My children, (said she), on this day of rejoicing, it is an addition to my satisfaction to see you restored to each other. Friend Scipio, I give you back your spouse, and protest to you, that her conduct has always been irreproachable: you may live here happily together; and you, Beatrice, attach yourself to Antonia, and be as much devoted to her as your husband is to Signior de Santillane." Scipio, after this, could not help looking upon his wife as another Penelope, and promised to treat her with all imaginable affection.

The young peasants and their partners, having danced all day, retired to their own houses; but the festival was continued at the castle, where a magnificent supper was prepared; and when it was time to go to rest, the grand vicar blessed the nuptial bed; Scraphina undressed the bride, and the noblemen of Leyva did me the same honor. What was merry enough, the officers of Don Alphonso, and the ladies of the governess, took it in their heads to perform the same ceremony to Beatrice and Scipio, who, to make the scene more comical, very gravely allowed themselves to be stripped and put to bed.

#### CHAPTER X.

*What followed the marriage of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia. The beginning of Scipio's history.*

On the very next day after my marriage, the lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, after having given me a thousand new marks of friendship; so that my secretary and I remained in the house, with our wives and servants only.

The care which both of us took to please the ladies was not ineffectual: in a little time I inspired my wife with as much love for me as I had for her; and Scipio made his spouse forget the sorrows which he had made her suffer. Beatrice, who had a pliant, obliging temper, easily insinuated herself into the favor, and gained the confidence of her mistress. In short, we agreed, all four, to admiration, and began to enjoy a situation worthy of envy. All our days glided away in the most agreeable amusements. Antonia was naturally grave, but Beatrice and I were very gay; and had we been other-

wise, Scipio's presence was enough to keep off melancholy. He was an incomparable fellow for society; one of those comical creatures, whose appearance alone can make a company merry.

One day that we took a whim, after dinner, to go and take a siesta in the most agreeable place of the wood, my secretary was in such good humor, that he banished all desire of sleeping by his merry discourse. "Hold thy tongue, friend, (said I,) or, if thou art resolved to keep us from taking our nap, entertain us with some story worthy of our attention."

"With all my heart, Sir, (answered he:) shall I recount the history of King Pelagius?" "I would rather hear thy own, (I replied;) but that is a pleasure thou hast not thought proper to give me since we lived together, nor ever will, I suppose." "And what is the reason? (said he.) If I have not recounted my own history, it was because you never expressed the least desire to hear it: it is not, therefore, my fault that you are ignorant of my adventures; and if you are in the least curious to know them, I am ready to satisfy your curiosity." Antonia, Beatrice, and I, took him at his word, and disposed ourselves in order to hear his narration, which could not miss of having a good effect, either in diverting or lulling us asleep.

Had it depended upon me, (said Scipio,) I should have been the son of some grandee, or knight of Alcantara at least; but as one does not choose his own father, you must know that mine was an honest soldier, of the holy brotherhood. Torribio Scipio by name. While he was travelling to and fro on the highway, where his profession obliged him almost always to be, he met by accident, one day, between Cuenca and Toledo, a young gipsy, whom he thought very handsome. She was alone, on foot, and carried her whole fortune in a kind of knapsack on her back: "Which way do you go, my dear?" said he to her, softening his voice, which was naturally rough. "Signior Cavalier, (answered she,) I am going to Toledo, where I hope to gain an honest livelihood in some shape or other." "That is a laudable intention, (he resumed,) and I don't doubt that you have more strings than one to your bow." "Yes, thank God, (said she,) I have more talents than one; I can compose pomatums and essences for the ladies; I tell fortunes; turn the sieve to find things that are lost; and show all that people want to see in a glass or mirror."

Torribio concluding that such a girl would be a very advantageous match for him, who could scarce live by his employment though he was very dexterous at it, offered to marry her: she accepted the proposal, and they repaired with all diligence to Toledo, where they were wedded; and you see in me the worthy fruit of these noble nuptials. They settled in the suburbs, where my mother began to sell pomatums and essences; but that trade not answering, she became a fortune-teller. It was then that she saw the crowns and pistoles shower upon her; a thousand dupes, of both sexes, soon raised the reputation of Coscolina, which was the gipsy's name. Somebody came every day to beg she would employ her ministry for him: sometimes a needy nephew, who wanted to know when his uncle, whose sole heir he was, would set out for the other world; and sometimes a girl, wishing to know if a certain cavalier, to whom she had granted the favor on promise of marriage, would keep his word.

Please to observe that my mother's predictions were always favorable to those who solicited them: if they proved true, good and well; but when they came back to reproach her, because the contrary of what she had prophesied came to pass, she answered coldly that they must attribute it to the demon, who, notwithstanding the force of the conjurations that she employed to make him reveal what would happen, was sometimes so malicious as to deceive her.

When my mother, for the honor of her profession, thought she must make the devil appear in her operations, Torribio Scipio always acted that part, which he performed perfectly well; the roughness of his voice, and ugliness of his face, giving him an appearance suitable to the character which he represented. Those that were in the least timorous were always terrified by my father's figure. But one day, unfortunately, there came a brutal fellow of a captain to see the devil, whom he ran through the body. The holy office, informed of the devil's death, sent its officers to the house of Coscolina, whom they seized, with all her effects; and I, who was then but seven years old, was put into the hospital of Los Ninos. There were in that house charitable clergymen, who, being well paid for the education of poor orphans, were at the trouble of teaching them to read and write.

They looked upon me as a promising child, and on that account distinguished me from the rest by choosing me to run on their errands. They sent me into the city with letters and messages; and I made the responses at mass. By way of recompense, they undertook to teach me the Latin tongue; but they behaved so rudely, and treated me with such rigor, notwithstanding the small services I did them, that, being no longer able to bear it, I ran away one morning early, when I was sent out on an errand; and, far from returning to the hospital, quitted Toledo for the suburbs that lie on the Seville side of the city. Though I was scarce yet nine years old, I felt a sensible pleasure in being free, and master of my own actions. I was without money and without food; but what did that signify? I had no lessons to study, nor themes to compose. After having walked about two hours,

\* Pelagius, the first King of Leon, reigned in the eighth century; and he lived some time in subjection to the Saracens in Spain; but resolving to shake off the yoke of such barbarous tyrants, he put himself at the head of the Christians who had fled for refuge to the Asturian mountains; and being declared king, took arms against the Infidels, whom having vanquished in a bloody battle, he laid the foundation of the kingdom of Leon, in which he reigned twenty years.

† Los Ninos, orphans, or rather boys

my little legs began to refuse their service: I had never before made such a long journey; and I found myself obliged to halt, and give them some rest. I sat down under a tree, by the side of the road; and there, for my amusement, took my Rudiments out of my pocket, and read it in sport; then remembering the stripes and floggings which it had made me receive, I tore out the leaves, saying, in great wrath: "Ah, dog of a book! thou shalt never make me shed tears again." While I thus glutted my revenge, strewing the ground about me with declensions and conjugations, a hermit passed by, with a white beard, large spectacles, and a venerable air. He came up to me, and we examined each other with great eagerness. "My little gentleman, (said he, smiling,) we seem to look at one another with great attention: I believe it would not be a bad scheme for us to live together in my hermitage, which is not two hundred yards from hence." "I am your humble servant! (answered I, hastily:) I have no ambition to be a hermit." The good old man laughed at this reply; and embracing me, said, "Don't be frightened at my dress, my son; though it is not agreeable, it is useful: it makes me lord of a charming retreat, and of the neighboring villages; the inhabitants of which love, or rather idolize me. Come along with me (added he), and I will give you a jacket like this that I wear. If you choose it, you shall share with me the sweets of my retired life; and if you don't like it upon trial, you shall not only be at liberty to leave me, but you may be also assured that I will not fail to give you a gratification at parting." I suffered myself to be persuaded, and followed the old hermit, who asked me several questions; to which I answered with an ingenuousness which I have not always preserved in the sequel. When we came to the hermitage, he presented to me some fruit, which I devoured, having eaten nothing the whole day but a morsel of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted in the morning at the hospital. The anchorite, seeing me make such good use of my jaws, said, "Courage, my child; don't spare the fruit; I have ample provision of it, thank God; and I did not bring thee hither to let thee starve." This was indeed very true; for in less than an hour after our arrival he lighted a fire, spitted a leg of mutton; and, while I turned the spit, covered a small table with a very dirty napkin, upon which he laid two plates, one for himself and another for me. When the mutton was ready, he took it off the spit, and cut some slices for our supper, which was not a dry meal; for we drank excellent wine, of which also he had good store. "Well, my chicken (said he, when we had done eating), art thou satisfied with my ordinary? This is the manner in which thou wilt be treated every day if thou livest with me. Besides, thou shalt do what thou pleasest in this hermitage. All that I exact of thee is, to accompany me when I go a begging through the neighboring villages, and lead an ass with two panniers, which the charitable peasants usually fill with eggs, bread, flesh, and fish. This is all I require of thee." "I will do every thing you desire (I replied), provided you don't oblige me to learn Latin." "Brother Chrysostom (that was the old hermit's name) could not help laughing at my simplicity; and assured me anew that he did not intend to force my inclination.

We went a begging the very next day with the ass, which I led by the halter, and reaped a plentiful harvest, every peasant being glad of an opportunity to put something in our panniers: one threw in a whole loaf; another, a large piece of bacon; a third, a partridge; in short, we brought home victuals enough for eight days; a circumstance that denotes the great friendship and esteem that the country people had for the hermit. It is true he was of great use to them, in giving them his advice when they came to consult him, in re-establishing peace in families where discord reigned, in marrying their daughters, in furnishing them with remedies for a thousand sorts of diseases, and in teaching prayers proper for barren women who wished to have children.

By what I have said, you see that I was well fed in my hermitage. I was as well accommodated in point of sleeping: stretched upon good fresh straw, with a cushion of coarse cloth under my head, and a covering of the same stuff over my body, I made but one nap, which lasted all night long. Brother Chrysostom, who had promised to give me a hermit's garb, made one for me from an old robe that he used to wear, and called me little Brother Scipio. As soon as I appeared in the villages, in that regular habit, I was thought so handsome, that the ass was better loaded than formerly: the business was, who should give most to the little brother, with whose figure they were so well pleased.

The easy idle life which I led with the old hermit could not be disagreeable to a boy of my age: accordingly, I liked it so well, that I should have continued there still, if the Fates had not spun for me days of a very different kind: but the destiny which I was bound to fulfil soon detached me from idleness, and made me quit Brother Chrysostom, as you shall hear. I frequently perceived the old man at work upon the cushion that served him for a pillow: he did nothing but sew and unsew it; and I observed one day that he put money into it. This remark was attended by a curiosity which I proposed to gratify the very first journey he should take to Toledo, whither he was wont to go once a week. I waited impatiently for the day, without having as yet any other design than of satisfying my curiosity. At length the old man set out, and I ripped up his pillow, where I found among the wool with which it was filled, the value of about fifty crowns in different sorts of coin.

This treasure, in all probability, was the gratitude of the country people whom the hermit had cured by his remedies, and of the women who had been blessed with children by virtue of his prayers. Be this as it will, I no sooner saw that it was money, which I could appropriate to myself with impunity, than my Egyptian disposition prevailed. I was seized with a desire of stealing it, which can be attributed



to nothing but the force of that blood which circulated in my veins. I yielded to the temptation without resistance, secured the money in a kind of bag where we kept our combs and night-caps; then quitting my hermit's habit, and resuming that of the orphan, I ran away from the hermitage, believing that I carried off in my bag the whole riches of the Indies.

You have heard my beginning, (continued Scipio;) and I don't doubt that you expect a train of facts of the same nature: your expectation will not be deceived; I have many other such exploits to recount, before I come to my laudable actions: but I will come to them at last; and you will see, by my narration, that a rogue may very well turn an honest man.

Child as I was, I was not fool enough to return to Toledo; that would have been exposing me to the chance of meeting Brother Chrysostom, who would have made me restore my treasure in a very disagreeable manner: I followed another road, which conducted me to the village of Galves, where I stopt at an inn, the landlady of which was a widow of forty, who had all the qualities requisite for turning the penny. This woman no sooner cast her eyes upon me, than judging by my dress that I was a fugitive from the orphan-hospital, she asked who I was and whither I went. I answered, that having lost both father and mother, I wanted to go to service. "Child, (said she,) canst thou read?" I assured her, that I both read and wrote to admiration. Indeed, I could form my letters, and join them in such a manner as somewhat resembled writing, and that is enough for the occasions of a village tavern. "I take thee into my service, (said the landlady;) thou wilt not be altogether useless, but shalt keep an account of all my debts, active and passive. I will give thee no wages, (added she,) because the good company that come here never forget the servants; so that thou mayest depend upon receiving good perquisites."

I accepted the proposal, reserving to myself, as you may well believe, the right of changing the air as soon as my stay at Galves should become disagreeable. When I found myself engaged in the service of this inn, I became very uneasy in my mind: I did not desire to be thought a moidered man; and was very anxious to know where I should conceal my hoard, so as that it should be secure from every stranger's hand. I did not as yet know the house well enough to trust to those places which seemed most proper to secure it. With what perplexities are riches attended! I determined, however, to put my bag in a corner of our corn-loft, where there was straw; and believing it more safe there than in any other place, made myself as easy as possible. There were three servants in this house, a fat hostler, a young maid of Galicia, and myself; each of us drew as much as we could from the travellers that halted, whether they came on horseback or a-foot. I commonly caught some halfpence of these gentlemen when I brought in the bill; they gave something also to the hostler, for taking care of their beasts: but as for the Galician, who was the idol of all the carriers that passed, she got as many crowns as we did farthings. Every penny that I received I carried to increase my treasure in the corn-loft; and the more I saw my wealth increase, the more did I feel my little heart attached to it: I sometimes kissed the specie, and contemplated the different pieces with a degree of rapture which none but misers can conceive.

This affection for my treasure obliged me to go and visit it thirty times a day: I frequently met the landlady upon the stairs; and she being naturally distrustful, was curious, one day, to know what it was that could bring me every moment to the corn-loft. Thither therefore she went, and searched every corner, imagining that I, perhaps, concealed in that place some things which I had stole in the house. She did not forget to remove the straw that covered my bag, which having found, she opened it; and seeing crowns and pistoles appear, believed, or pretended to believe, that I had stole them from her. She seized the sum total accordingly: then calling me little wretch and little rascal, ordered the hostler, who was entirely devoted to her will, to give me fifty good lashes, which when I had received, she turned me out of doors, saying, that she would suffer no knave to live in her house. In vain did I protest that I had not robbed the landlady: she maintained the contrary; and of course her word was believed rather than mine. Thus, Brother Chrysostom's money passed from one thief to another.

I lamented the loss of my money, as a man mourns the death of an only child: and though my tears did not retrieve what I had lost, at least they excited the compassion of some people who saw them shed; and among others, of the curate of Galves, who was passing by chance. He seemed moved at my melancholy condition, and carried me along with him to the parsonage; where, in order to gain my confidence, or rather pump me, he began by pitying my situation. "How much (said he) does this poor child deserve compassion! It is not surprising, if, abandoned to himself in such a tender age, he has committed a bad action. Most men find it difficult to live honest through the whole course of their lives." Then, addressing himself to me, "My son, (added he,) from what part of Spain do you come, and who are your parents? You seem to be of some good family. Tell me ingenuously, and be assured that I will not abandon you."

The curate, by this polite and charitable discourse, engaged me insensibly to discover all my affairs with great sincerity. I made a general confession. After which, he said, "Friend, though it does not become hermits to hoard up money, that does not lessen your crime: in robbing Brother Chrysostom, you have transgressed that article of the Decalogue which forbids theft: but I'll oblige the landlady to restore the money, which I will send to the hermit; so that your conscience may be easy on that score." But this, I swear, was the least of my uncharities. The curate, who had a design of ~~me~~ ~~own~~, did not ~~stop~~ ~~there~~. "My child,

(said he,) I interest myself in your behalf, and will procure a good place for you. I will to-morrow send you by a carrier to my nephew, who is a canon of the cathedral of Toledo; he will not refuse, at my request, to receive you into the number of his laquies, who live plentifully, like so many incumbents, on the revenue of his prebend; you will be perfectly well situated, I can assure you."

I was so much consoled by this assurance, that I no longer thought of the bag, nor the stripes which I had received, my mind being wholly possessed with the pleasure of living like an incumbent. Next day, while I was at breakfast, a carrier came to the parsonage, according to the curate's orders, with two mules bridled and saddled. I was helped up on the one, the carrier mounted the other, and we set out for Toledo. My fellow-traveller was a fellow of humor, who liked nothing better than to make himself merry at another's expense. "My little journey, (said he,) you have a good friend in the curate of Galves; he could not give you a better proof of his affection than that of recommending you to the service of his nephew the canon, whom I have the honor to know, and who is, without contradiction, the pearl of the whole chapter. He is none of those devotees whose pale and meagre faces preach up mortification. He has a capacious countenance, a rosy complexion, a merry look, is a jovial soul, who enjoys the present hour, and in particular loves good cheer. You will live in his house like a little prince."

The rogue of a carrier, perceiving that I listened with great satisfaction, continued to extol the happiness I should enjoy in the canon's service; and did not leave off speaking until we arrived at the village of Obisa, where we stopt a little to bait our mules. The carrier, while he walked about in the inn, fell by accident, out of his pocket, a paper which I was cunning enough to pick up, without being observed, and which I found means to read while he was in the stable. It was a letter directed to the priests of the orphan-hospital, and conceived in these terms:

"Gentlemen, I thought I was bound in charity to send back to you a little knave, who is a runaway from your hospital. He does not seem to want capacity, but deserves to be carefully mewed up: and I hope that, by proper correction, he will in time do well. That God may preserve your pious and charitable workshops, is the prayer of  
"The Curate of Galves."

When I had read this letter, which informed me of the curate's good intentions, I did not long hesitate. To leave the inn, and gain the banks of the Tagus, which was more than a league from thence, was the work of a moment. Fear lent me wings to fly from the priests of the orphan-hospital, to whom I would by no means return, so much as I was disgusted with their manner of teaching the Latin tongue. I entered Toledo as gaily as if I had known where to board. True, it is a city of benediction, in which a man of genius, reduced to the necessity of living at his neighbor's expense, cannot die of hunger. Scarce had I arrived in the market-place, when a well-dressed cavalier, whom I passed, laid hold of my arm, and said, "Hark'e, my boy, will you serve me? I should be glad to have such a lacquey as you." "And I should be glad (answered I) to have such a master as you." "If that be the case, (he resumed,) thou art mine from this moment. Follow me." This I did, without making any farther reply.

This cavalier, who might be about thirty years of age, and was called Don Abel, lodged in a house where he possessed a very handsome apartment. He was by profession a gamester, and we lived together in this manner: In the morning I cut as much tobacco for him as would fill five or six pipes, brushed his clothes, and went for the barber to shave him and dress his whiskers. After which he went out, and made a tour among the tennis-courts, from whence he returned about eleven or twelve o'clock at night. But each morning before he went out, he gave me three rials for my day's expense, leaving me at liberty to do what I pleased until ten o'clock at night: he was very well satisfied with me, provided he found me at home when he returned: he ordered a doublet and hose of livery to be made for me, so that I looked like a page of a lady of the town. I was very well satisfied with my place, and certainly I could not have found one more agreeable to my humor.

I had led this happy life almost a whole month, when my master asked if I was pleased with his behavior. I answered, that I could not be more so. "Well, then, (he resumed,) we shall set out to-morrow for Seville, whither my affairs call me. Thou wilt not be sorry to see that capital of Andalusia."

"He that hath not Seville seen,  
(saith the proverb)

Is no traveller, I ween."

I assured him that I was ready to follow him whithersoever he should go. That very day, the Seville carrier came to his lodging, to fetch a large cofter that contained all his moveables; and in the morning we set out for Andalusia.

Signior Don Abel was so lucky at play, that he never lost, except when he chose to lose. This talent often obliged him to change his place of habitation, that he might avoid the resentment of dupes; and this was the cause of our present journey. Being arrived at Seville, we took lodgings near the gate of Cordova, and began to live as we had lived at Toledo; but my master found a difference between these two cities. In the tennis-courts of Seville, he met with gamesters who played as successfully as he, so that he came home sometimes very much out of humor. One morning, being chagrined at the loss of one hundred pistoles which he ventured the preceding day, he asked why I had not carried the dirty linen to a woman whom he employed to wash and perfume it. I answered, that I had forgot. Upon which, falling into a passion, he gave me half a dozen boxes on the face, so rudely, that he made me see more candles than ever burnt in

Solomon's temple. "There, little wretch, (said he,) there is something to make you mudy your business. Must I be always at your tail, to tell you what you have to do? Why are you not as ready to work as to eat? Are you such a beast, as to be incapable of anticipating my orders and occasions?" So saying, he went out of his apartment, leaving me very much mortified at the blows I had received for such a slight fault. I don't know what adventure happened to him soon after in the tennis-court, but one evening he came home very much heated, and said, "Scipio, I am resolved to go to Italy, and must embark the day after to-morrow, in a ship bound for Genoa. I have my own reasons for making that voyage; wilt thou not accompany me, and lay hold of such a fair occasion to see the most delightful country in the world?" I said I would, but at the same time proposed to disappear just when he intended to embark. I thought I would revenge myself of him in this manner, and was very well pleased with the scheme, which I could not help imparting to a professed bravo, whom I met in the street; for, since my arrival at Seville, I had contracted some bad acquaintances, and this in particular. I told him in what manner, and for what I had been buffeted; then communicated my design of leaving Don Abel when he should be just ready to go on board, and asked his opinion of my resolution.

The bravo frowned while he listened to me, and twirled the curls of his mustachio; then, blaming my master with an air of gravity, "Little gentleman, (said he,) you are dishonored for ever, if you restrict yourself to that frivolous revenge which you have hatched. It is not enough to let Don Abel depart by himself; that would not be punishment sufficient. The chastisement must be proportioned to the injury. Let us therefore carry off his goods and money, which we will share like brothers after he is gone." Although I was naturally inclined to thieving, I was frightened at the proposal of such an important robbery. Nevertheless, the arch rogue who made it did not fail to persuade me to it; and you shall hear the success of our enterprise. The bravo, who was a big strong fellow, came to our lodging next day in the twilight, when I showed him the cofter in which my master had already secured his effects, and asked if he could carry such a weight. "Such a weight! (said he,) know, that when the business is to carry off the goods of another, I can lift Noah's ark." So saying, he flung the cofter on his shoulders with ease, and went down stairs with it upon tip-toes. I followed him with some caution, and we were just going out at the street-door, when Don Abel, brought thither so seasonably by his good genius, appeared all of a sudden.

"Where art thou going with the cofter?" (said he.) I was so confounded, that I stood silent; and the bravo seeing the affair misgive, throw down his load, and betook himself to flight in order to avoid explanations. "Where art thou going with the cofter?" (said my master for the second time.)

"Sir, (answered I, more dead than alive,) I am going to carry it on board the ship in which you are to embark to-morrow for Italy."

"Ha! (he replied,) dost thou know in what ship I intended to sail?" "No, Sir, (said I,) but I have a tongue in my head, and I should have inquired at the harbor, where somebody would have certainly told me." At this my answer, which he suspected, he darted such a furious look at me, that I was afraid of a second beating. "Who ordered you (cried he) to bring my cofter out of the house?" "You yourself, (said I.) Don't you remember how you upbraided me some days ago? Did not you say while you beat me, that you expected I would prevent your orders, and do what was proper for your service of my own accord? Now, it was in consequence of this direction that I employed one to carry your cofter to the ship." The gamester observing that I was more mischievous than he imagined, dismissed me immediately, saying, with an air of indifference, "Go, Mr. Scipio, and heaven be your guide. I don't choose to play with people who have sometimes a card too many, sometimes one too few. Get out of my sight, (added he, in another tone,) lest I make you sing without your gamut." I saved him the trouble of repeating his demand, and got off in a twinkling, being wonderfully afraid that he would strip me of my clothes, which however he luckily spared. I walked along the street, considering where I could lie, with my two rials, which constituted my whole stock. I arrived at the gate of the archbishop's palace; and as his Grace's supper was then dressing, an agreeable savour issued from the kitchen, and diffused itself a whole league around. "Zooks! (said I to myself,) I should like to dispatch one of those ragouts which salute my nose. I should even be contented with an opportunity of dipping my four fingers and thumb in it. What! can't I fall upon some method of tasting these dainties that smell so agreeably! the thing does not seem so impossible." I whetted my imagination accordingly, and, by dint of musing, hatched a trick, which I immediately put in practice, and which succeeded to my wish. I entered the court of the palace, and running towards the kitchen, cried as loud as I could, Help! help! as if I had been pursued by some assassin.

At my repeated cries, Mr. Diego, the archbishop's cook, with two or three scullions, came running out to know the cause; and seeing nobody but me, asked why I made such a noise. "Ah! Sir, (said I, pretending to be frightened almost out of my wits,) for the love of St. Polycarp, pray save me from the fury of a bravo that wants to kill me."

"Where is this bravo?" (cried Diego;) you are quite alone, without so much as a cat at your heels. Go, my child, lay aside your fear. It was probably somebody who wanted to terrify you for his diversion, and who did well not to follow you into this palace; for, if he had, we should have cut off his ears." "No, no, (said I to the cook;) he did not pursue me for his diversion. He is a big ill-looking fellow, who intends to strip me, and waits hard by in the street to catch me as I go out." "He shall wait a long time there, (he replied,)

for you shall stay here till to-morrow, and want for neither supper nor bed."

I was transported with joy when I heard the words; and it was a ravishing sight to me, when, being conducted into the kitchen by Mr. Diego, I beheld the preparations for his Grace's supper. I reckoned fifteen persons at work, but I could not number the dishes that I saw, so careful had Providence been in behalf of the archbishop. It was then, that feasting upon the steams of the ragouts which I had only smelled afar off before, I became acquainted with sensuality. I had the honor to sup and sleep with the scullions, whose friendship I gained to that degree, that next day, when I went to thank Mr. Diego for the asylum he had so generously afforded, he said, "Our kitchen lads tell me they would be glad to have you for a comrade, they like your humor so well: would you choose to be their companion?" I answered, "That if I enjoyed that piece of good fortune, I should think myself perfectly happy." "If that be the case, my friend," (said he), look upon yourself from this moment as an officer of the palace." So saying, he went and presented me to the major-domo, who, on account of my sprightly look, judged me worthy to be received among the turnspits.

I was no sooner in possession of such an honorable employment, than Mr. Diego, according to the custom of cooks in great families, who privately send victuals to their mistresses, chose me to carry to a certain lady in the neighborhood sometimes loins of veal, and sometimes fowl or venison. This good lady was a widow, scarce turned of thirty, very handsome, very smart, and to all appearance not over faithful to her cook, who not only furnished her with victuals, bread, sugar, and oil, but also provided her good wine, at the expense of the archbishop.

I was effectually improved in the palace of his Grace, where I played a very pleasant prank, which is still spoken of at Seville. The pages and some other domestics, in order to celebrate their master's birthday, took it in their heads to represent a comedy. They chose that of the Benavides;\* and as they had occasion for a boy of my age, to play the part of the young King of Leon, they cast their eyes upon me. The major-domo, who piqued himself upon his talent of declamation, undertook to instruct me; and after he had given me a few lessons, assured them that I should not be the worst actor in the play. As our master was at the expense of the entertainment, no cost was spared to render it magnificent. A theatre was built in the largest hall of the palace, and decorated with great taste. There was a bed of turf made in the back scene, on which I was to appear asleep, and the Moors fall upon me to make me prisoner. When the actors were perfect in their parts, the archbishop fixed the day for the representation, and did not fail to invite the most considerable noblemen and ladies of the city to come and see it. The day being come, each actor was busied with his dress. As for mine, it was brought to me by a tailor, accompanied by our major-domo; who, having been at the trouble of teaching me my part, was also pleased to superintend my dress. The tailor clothed me with a rich velvet robe, trimmed with gold lace and buttons, with hanging sleeves adorned with fringe of the same metal; and the major-domo himself placed upon my head a crown of paper, powdered with a quantity of fine pearls, intermixed with false stones. Besides, they girded me with a sash of pink-colored silk wrought with silk flowers; and every thing they said to me seemed to lend me wings to run away with the plunder. At length the play began about twilight. I opened the scene by pronouncing some verses, importing, that being unable to keep myself awake, I was going to abandon myself to slumber; at the same time I withdrew, and lay down on the bed of turf which had been prepared for me; but instead of falling asleep, I began to consider how I could get into the street, and escape with my royal robes. A little private stair that led down under the theatre in the hall, seemed proper for the execution of my design. I accordingly got up nimbly, and seeing that nobody took notice of me, slipped down that stair which conducted me into the hall, the door of which I gained, crying, "Room, room! I am going to change my dress." Every one made way for me, so that in less than two minutes I got out of the palace with impunity, and by favor of the night repaired to the house of a bravo of my acquaintance.

He was perfectly astonished to see me in that garb; and when I imparted the affair, he laughed until he was ready to burst; then embracing me with so much the more joy, as he flattered himself with the hope of sharing the spoils of the King of Leon, he congratulated me on having performed such a fine stroke, and told me, that if I went on at that rate, my genius would one day make a great noise in the world. After we had sufficiently made ourselves merry, "What shall we do with this rich dress?" (said I to the bravo): he answered, "Give yourself no trouble on that score. I know an honest broker, who, without expressing the least curiosity, buys every thing that is brought him, provided he likes the bargain; to-morrow morning I will go and bring him hither." In effect, the bravo went out next day early, leaving me abed in his room, and in two hours returned with the broker, who carried a yellow bag under his arm. "Friend," (said he to me), this is Signior Ybaguez de Segovia, who, in spite of the bad example shown by his brethren of the trade, deals with the most scrupulous integrity. He will tell you to a farthing the value of this dress that you want to part with, and you may depend upon his estimation." "Yes, certainly," (said the broker). "I must be a wretch indeed, if I prized a thing under the true value. That is a crime with which I was never taxed, thank God, and no man shall ever lay it to the charge of Ybaguez de Segovia. Let us see the goods you want to sell, and I will conscientiously tell you what they

are worth." "Here they are," (said the bravo, showing them); and you must allow that nothing can be more magnificent: observe the beauty of that Genoa velvet, and the richness of the trimming." "I am quite charmed with it," (replied the broker, after he had quitted it attentively); nothing can be finer." "And what do you think of the pearls of this crown?" (resumed my friend). "If they were more round," (said Ybaguez), they would be inestimable; however, such as they are, I think them very pretty, and like them as well as the rest of the dress. I sincerely own it, (continued he), another rogue of a broker in my place would pretend to despise the merchandize, that he might have it cheap, and would not be ashamed of offering twenty pistoles for it; but I, who have some conscience, will give forty."

If Ybaguez had said a hundred, he would not then have been a just appraiser; since the pearls alone were well worth two hundred crowns. The bravo, who had a fellow-feeling with him, said to me, "You see how fortunate you are in falling into the hands of an honest man. Signior Ybaguez prizes every thing as if he was upon his death-bed." "That is true," (said the broker), and therefore I never rise or fall a farthing in my price. Well, (added he), is it a bargain? shall I count out the money to you?" "Stay," (replied the bravo), my friend must first try on this suit of clothes, which I desired you to bring for him. I am mistaken if they won't fit him exactly." Then the broker, untying his bundle, showed me a doublet and hose, of a very good dark-colored cloth, with silver buttons; the whole seemingly half-worn. I got up to try this dress, which, though both too long and too wide, appeared to these gentlemen to have been made on purpose for me. Ybaguez rated it at ten pistoles; and as he never abated one farthing of what he asked, we were obliged to comply with his valuation. So he took thirty pistoles out of his purse, and spread them upon the table; after which, he made another bundle of my crown and royal robes, which he carried off accordingly.

When he was gone, the bravo said, "I am very well satisfied with this broker." And good reason he had to be so: for, I am sure, he gave him one hundred pistoles, at least, by way of gratification. But he was not contented with that sum: he took, without ceremony, the half of the money that lay on the table, leaving the other half to me, and saying, "My dear Scipio, with these fifteen pistoles that remain, I advise you to quit this city forthwith: for you may be assured that the archbishop will give orders to search for you every where. I should be extremely mortified, if, after having signalized yourself by an action which will do honor to your history, you should foolishly suffer yourself to be apprehended." I answered, that I was fully resolved to leave Seville; and in effect, after having bought a hat and some shirts, I gained the vast and delightful plain that stretches among the vines and olives, to the ancient city of Carmona, and, three days after, arrived at Cordova.\*

I lodged at an inn, as you enter the great square where the merchants live; and gave myself out for the son of a good family at Toledo, who travelled for my pleasure. I was well enough clothed to make people believe this story, and the landlord was finally convinced, by the sight of some pistoles, which I let him see as if by chance. It is probable, indeed, that my tender years made him believe I was some little libertine, who had run away from his parents after having robbed them. Be this as it will, he did not seem curious to know more than what I told him of the matter; being, in all likelihood, afraid that his curiosity might make me change my lodging. For six rials a day I lived very well in this inn, which was frequented by a good deal of company; there being at supper in the evening no less than twelve people at one table. It was very diverting to see every one eating without speaking a syllable, except one man, who, talking incessantly, at random, compensated for the silence of the rest by his impertinent prating. He affected the wit, told stories, and endeavored, by quaint sayings, to entertain the company, who, from time to time, laughed heartily, though not so much at the brightness of his sallies, as at his ridiculous behavior.

As for my part, I paid so little attention to the discourse of this original, that I should have risen from supper without being able to give any account of what he said, had he not found means to interest me in his conversation. "Gentlemen," (said he, towards the end of our meal), I have kept for the dessert a most diverting story: an adventure that befell, a few days ago, at the palace of the archbishop of Seville. I had it from a bachelor of my acquaintance, who told me that he was present when it happened." These words discomposed me a good deal; I did not doubt that it was my adventure which he intended to recount: and I was not mistaken. This person gave a faithful detail of it, and even informed me of what I did not know; that is, what happened in the hall after my departure; and this you shall hear.

Scarcely had I betook myself to flight, when the Moors, who, according to the performance which was represented, were to carry me off, appeared upon the stage, with a design of surprising me on the bed of turf where they thought I was asleep; but when they went to seize the King of Leon, they were very much astonished to find neither king nor knave. The play was immediately interrupted; all the actors were perplexed: some called me, others searched for me; one hallooed, and another cursed me. The archbishop, perceiv-

ing the trouble and confusion that reigned behind the scenes, asked what was the matter. A page, who acted the Gracioso of the piece, hearing the prelate's voice, came out and said to his Grace—"My lord, you need not fear that the Moors will take the King of Leon prisoner; he has escaped with his royal robes." "Heaven be praised!" (cried the archbishop), he was very much in the right to fly from the enemies of our religion, and escape the chains which they had prepared for him. He has, doubtless, returned towards Leon, the capital of his kingdom; and I wish he may get home without meeting with any bad accident. Let no man go in pursuit of him, for I should be sorry if his majesty received any mortification from me." The prelate, having spoke in this manner, ordered my part to be read and the play to go on.

## CHAPTER XI.

*The sequel of Scipio's history.*

As long as my money lasted, the landlord treated me with great respect; but no sooner did he perceive that my finances were exhausted, than he looked cool upon me, picked a quarrel, and one morning early desired me to leave his house. I quitted it with disdain, and went into a church belonging to the Dominicans, where, while I heard mass, an old mendicant came and asked alms of me. I took two or three maravedis out of my pocket, and giving them to him, said, "Friend, pray to God to send me some good place: if your prayer is heard, you shall not repent of your devotion, and may depend upon my gratitude."

At these words, the beggar viewed me very attentively, and answered with a serious air, "What post would you have?" "I could wish," (said I), to be a lacquey in some good family." He then asked if my occasions were pressing. "They cannot be more so," (I resumed); for, if I have not the good fortune of being settled very soon, there is no medium; I must either die of hunger, or betake myself to your trade." "If you are reduced to such necessity," (said he), you, who are not at all calculated for our business, must be in a very disagreeable situation: but were you in the least accustomed to our way of life, you would prefer it to servitude, which is, without contradiction, inferior to beggary. Nevertheless, since you choose to be a servant, rather than to live a free and independent life, as I do, you shall have a master immediately. Notwithstanding my appearance, I can be of use to you: therefore, come hither to-morrow at the same hour."

Resolved to be punctual, I returned next day to the same place, where I had not been long, before the mendicant, coming up to me, bid me take the trouble to follow him. I did so; he conducted me to a cellar not far from the church; and this was the place of his residence. We entered his habitation; and sitting down upon a bench, which was at least a hundred years old, he spoke to me in this manner: "A good action, as the proverb says, always finds its recompense: you gave me charity yesterday, and that determines me to procure a place for you; and this, please God, I will soon perform. I am acquainted with an old Dominican, called Father Alexis, who is a holy ecclesiastic and great confessor. I have the honor to run of his errands, and acquit myself in that employment with so much fidelity and discretion, that he never refuses to use his interest for me and my friends. I have spoke to him of you in such a manner, that he is disposed to do you service; and I will present you to his reverence whenever you please." "There is not a moment to lose," (said I to the old beggar): let us go instantly to the good friar." The mendicant consented, and carried me forthwith to Father Alexis, whom we found in his room, busy in writing spiritual letters. He interrupted his work to speak to me, and told me, that, at the request of the mendicant, he would interest himself in my behalf. "Having been informed," (added he), that Signior Balthazar Velasquez wanted a lacquey, I wrote this morning in your favor; and he has answered that he will receive you implicitly on my recommendation. You may, this very day, go to him from me; he is my penitent and friend." The monk, on this occasion, exhorted me, during three quarters of an hour, to do my duty with fidelity and diligence. He enlarged particularly on the obligation I was under to serve Velasquez with zeal: after which, he assured me that he would take care to maintain me in my post, provided my master should be pleased with my behavior. Having thanked the monk for his generosity, I came out of the convent with the beggar; who told me that Signior Balthazar Velasquez was an old rich woolen-draper, of great meekness and simplicity. "I dare say," (added he), that you will be perfectly happy in his family." I inquired whereabouts the citizen lived, and went immediately to his house, after having promised to make an acknowledgment to the beggar as soon as I should take root in my place. I entered a large shop, where two well-dressed apprentices were walking to and fro in expectation of customers; and asking if their master was at home, told them I had a message to him, from Father Alexis. At the mention of that venerable name, I was shown into the back shop, where the merchant sat at a bureau, turning over the leaves of a large day-book. I saluted him with great respect, saying, while I advanced, "Signior, I am the young man whom the reverend Father Alexis recommended to you for a lacquey." "Ha! welcome, my child," (said he); that holy man's recommendation is sufficient. I receive thee into my service in preference to three or four lacqueys that were sent by other people. It is agreed: thy wages run up from this day forward."

I had not been long in the service of this citizen, before I perceived him to be just such a man as the beggar had described. His simplicity seemed even so great, that I could not help thinking, I should find some difficulty in abstaining from playing him some trick or other. He had been a wi-

\* Benavides, the surname of a noble family in Spain, descended from Alonso the Ninth, King of Castile.

\* Cordova, the ancient Corduba, a city of Andalusia, upon the banks of the Guadalquivir; formerly the residence of the Moorish Kings. It is famous for having given birth to the two Senecas, the poet Lucan, the great general Gonzales, and many more persons of note. The cathedral was heretofore a mosque, built by the Moors, after the model of Solomon's temple; and reckoned almost equal to that of Mecca, in beauty and magnificence: being supported by a vast number of marble columns. This city is also famous for the martyrdom of many saints, who were inhumanly butchered by the Infidels.



dower four years, and had two children; a son turned of five-and-twenty, and a daughter going in her fifteenth year, who, being brought up by a severe duenna, and directed by Father Alexis, walked in the path of virtue: but Gaspard Velasquez her brother, though nothing had been spared in his education, had all the vices of a young spendthrift. He sometimes lay two or three nights abroad; and if, at his return, his father took it into his head to reprimand him, Gaspard imposed silence upon him in a tone still higher than that of the old man.

"Scipio (said the draper to me one day,) I have a son who is the sole plague of my life; he is plunged in all manner of debauchery: a circumstance that surprises me very much; for his education was by no means neglected. I gave him good masters, and my friend Alexis hath done his utmost endeavor to put him in the right road; but he could not succeed: Gaspard is fallen into a state of libertinism. Thou wilt say, perhaps, that I treated him too gently in the beginning of his youth; and that he was undone by my indulgence: but that was not the case; he was always chastised when I thought he deserved to be used with rigor; for, good-natured as I am, I have resolution enough when there is occasion for it. I have even ordered him to be confined; and the consequence was, he became more wicked than ever. In a word, he has one of those bad dispositions which cannot be improved by good example, remonstrances, or chastisement. Heaven alone can work that miracle."

If I was not much moved at the sorrow of this unhappy father, at least I pretended to be so. "How much are you to be pitied, Sir! (said I:) a good man, like you, deserves to have a much better son." "Heaven, my child, (answered he,) is pleased to deprive me of that consolation. Among other causes which Gaspard gives me to complain of him, (added he,) I will tell thee in confidence, there is one that makes me very uneasy; that is, the inclination which he has to rob me, and which he but too often finds means to satisfy, in spite of all my vigilance. The lackey whom you succeed was in concert with him, and for that reason turned away. As for thee, I hope thou wilt not suffer thyself to be corrupted by my son; but espouse my interest, as Father Alexis has, doubtless, exhorted thee." "That I'll answer for, (said I:) his reverence exhorted me a whole hour to have nothing in view but your advantage: but I can assure you I had no need of being exhorted to that: I feel myself disposed to serve you faithfully, and my zeal will prove itself on all occasions."

He who hears one side only, hears nothing. Young Velasquez, who was a devilish beast, judging by my physiognomy that I would be as easily seduced as my predecessor, took me aside into a private place, and spoke to me in these terms: "Hark! my dear, I am persuaded that my father has charged thee to be a spy upon my actions; take care of thyself: I give thee notice beforehand, that thy employment is none of the most agreeable. If ever I perceive that thou makest thy remarks upon me, I will cudgel thee to death: whereas, if thou wilt assist me in cheating my father, thou mayest depend upon my gratitude. Must I be more plain with thee? Thou shalt have a share of the purchase. Make thy choice, therefore, and declare this instant either for the father or son; for I will admit of no neutrality."

"Sir, (answered I,) you are very short with me; and I plainly perceive that I cannot help espousing your cause, though in my heart I feel a reluctance to betray Signior Velasquez." "Thou oughtest to make no scruple in so doing, (replied Gaspard:) he is an old miser, who wants to keep me still in leading strings; a wretch who denies me the necessities of life, in refusing to furnish me with money for my pleasures; for pleasures are the necessities of life at the age of five-and-twenty: thou must therefore look upon my father in that point of view." "Enough, Sir, (said I:) there is no such thing as holding out against so just a cause of complaint. I offer my service to second you in your laudable undertakings; but let us conceal our mutual intelligence, that your faithful associate may not be turned out of doors. You will do well, methinks, in affecting to hate me: speak roughly to me before people, and do not spare ill language; even some boxes on the ear, and kicks on the breech, will not be amiss: on the contrary, the more marks of aversion you bestow upon me, the more confidence will Balthazar have in my integrity. As for my part, I will pretend to avoid your conversation: in serving you at table, I will seem to acquit myself with regret; and when I talk of you to the apprentices, don't take it ill that I rail at you with great bitterness."

"Egad! (cried Velasquez, hearing my last words,) I admire thy genius, my friend: thou showest, at thy age, an astonishing capacity for intrigue, from whence I conceive the most happy prospect; for I hope with thy assistance I shall not leave my father one single pistole." "You do me a great deal of honor (said I) in depending so much on my industry: I will do my utmost endeavor to justify the good opinion you have of my understanding; and if I fail, at least it shall not be my fault."

It was not long before I let Gaspard see that I was actually the man he wanted; and this is the first service I did him. Balthazar's strong box stood in his chamber, just by his bedside, and served him instead of a pew for prayer. Every time I looked at, my eyesight was regaled; and I frequently said to myself, "Friend strong box, must thou be always locked to me? Shall I never have the pleasure of contemplating thy contents?" As I went whenever I pleased into this chamber, which was forbid to nobody but Gaspard, I happened one day to perceive his father, who thinking himself unobserved, after having opened and locked his strong box, concealed the key behind a hanging. I marked the place well, and imparted my discovery to my young master, who embraced me with joy, saying, "Ah, my dear Scipio!

what a charming piece of news is this! Our fortune is made, my child. I will this very day give thee wax, with which thou mayest take the impression of the key, and put it into my hands. I shall easily find an obliging locksmith in Cordova; in which, thank heaven, there is no scarcity of rogues."

"But why (said I to Gaspard) would you make a false key when we can use the true one?" "Because (answered he) my father, through distrust, or some other motive, may take it in his head to hide it elsewhere; and therefore it is better to have one for ourselves. I approved of his caution; and yielding to his inclination, prepared for taking the impression of the key. This was executed one morning early, while my old master paid a visit to Father Alexis, with whom he had usually long conversations. This was not all; I used the key in opening the box, which being filled with large and small bags, threw me into a charming perplexity. I did not know which to choose, such affection did I conceive for both kinds. Nevertheless, as the fear of being surprised did not permit me to make a long scrutiny, I laid hold of one of the largest at a venture: then locking the coffer, and replacing the key behind the hangings, I quitted the chamber with my prey, which I went and concealed under my bed, in a small wardrobe where I lay."

Having performed this operation so successfully, I went immediately to the young Velasquez, who waited for me in a house where he had appointed to meet me, and gave him infinite joy by telling what I had done. He was so well satisfied, that he loaded me with caresses, and generously offered me the half of the money that was in the bag: but that I refused, saying, "No, no, Sir; the first bag is your own; use it for your occasions: I will soon return to the strong box, where, thank heaven, there is money enough for us both." In effect, three days after this I carried off a second bag, containing, as the former, five hundred crowns, of which I would receive one fourth only, notwithstanding the pressing instances of Gaspard that it should be equally divided between us.

As soon as this young man found himself well stocked, and consequently in a condition to satisfy his passion for women and play, he abandoned himself entirely to both: he had even the misfortune to fall in love with one of those famous coquettes, who devour and swallow the largest patrimonies in a very little time; and being at a terrible expense on her account, laid me under the necessity of paying so many visits to the strong box, that at length old Velasquez perceived himself robbed. "Scipio (said he one morning,) I must tell thee a secret: somebody robs me, my friend: my strong box has been opened, and several bags taken out: this is certain. Who must be taxed with this theft? Or rather, who else than my son Gaspard, who has entered my chamber by stealth, or been introduced by thee: for I am tempted to believe thee his accomplice, though you seem to hate one another so much. Nevertheless, I will not listen to my suspicion, since Father Alexis hath answered for thy fidelity." I replied, that, thank heaven, I never coveted my neighbor's wealth; and accompanied that lie with a hypocritical grimace, which served instead of an apology.

The old man, sure enough, said no more of the matter; but he did not leave off including me in his suspicion; and taking his precautions against our attempts, ordered his strong box to be secured by another lock, the key of which he always kept in his pocket. By these means, all commerce between us and the bags being broken, we looked very silly, especially Gaspard, who being no longer able to gratify the extravagance of his nymph, was afraid of losing the privilege of visiting her. He had genius enough, however, to invent an expedient which supported his expense a few days longer: and that ingenious shift was, to appropriate to himself, by way of loan, all my share of the evacuations which I had performed on the strong box. I gave it all, to the very last piece; and this, methinks, may pass for anticipated restitution which I made to the old merchant in the person of his heir.

The young man, when he had exhausted this resource, considering that he had now none left, fell into a profound and gloomy fit of melancholy, which gradually disordered his reason. He looked upon his father as the only plague of his life; he was seized with the most violent despair; and, without listening to the voice of Nature, the wretch conceived the horrible design of poisoning his parent. He not only communicated this execrable project to me, but even proposed that I should be the instrument of his vengeance. Being struck with horror at the proposal, "Sir (said I), is it possible that you should be so abandoned by heaven as to form this abominable resolution? What! are you capable of murdering the author of your own being? Shall it be said, that in Spain, in the very bosom of Christianity, a crime was committed, the very idea of which raises horror in the most barbarous nations? No, my dear master! (added I, falling on my knees before him,) no, you will not commit an action which would justly incense the whole world against you, and be attended with the most infamous chastisement."

I said a great many things more to dissuade Gaspard from such a guilty undertaking. I don't know where I found all the arguments of a virtuous man, which I used to combat his despair: but certain it is, I spoke like a doctor of Salamanca, though I was but a boy, and no other than the son of Coscolina. Nevertheless, in vain did I represent to him that he ought to reflect seriously, and courageously repel those detestable sentiments which had taken possession of his soul; all my eloquence was ineffectual. He hung his head, and remained in sullen silence; so that I concluded he would not swerve from his resolution, notwithstanding all I could say.

Whereupon, I went and demanded a private conversation with my old master: to whom, when we were shut up in a room together, I said, "Suffer me, Sir, to throw myself at

your feet, and implore your mercy." So saying, I fell down before him in great agitation, with my countenance bathed in tears. The merchant, surprised at my prostration and the disorder of my looks, asked what I had done. "A deed (I replied) of which I now heartily repent, and with which I will upbraid myself as long as I live. I have been weak enough to listen to your son, and to assist him in stealing your money." I then made a sincere confession of all that had passed on that subject: after which I gave him an account of the conversation I had with Gaspard, whose design I revealed, without forgetting the least circumstance.

Bad as his opinion of his son was, old Velasquez could scarce credit my information, the truth of which, however, having no reason to doubt; "Scipio, (said he, raising me, for I was still on my knees,) I pardon thee, in consideration of the important notice thou hast given me. Gaspard, (added he, raising his voice,) Gaspard has a design upon my life! Ah, ungrateful son! ah, monster! who had better been stifled in the birth, than allowed to live and become a parricide! what cause hast thou to attempt my life? I allow thee a reasonable yearly sum for thy pleasures, and thou art not satisfied! Must I permit thee to squander away my whole fortune?" Having uttered this bitter apostrophe, he had injunctions upon me to keep the secret, and said he would consider what was to be done in such a delicate conjuncture.

I was very anxious to know what resolution this unfortunate father would take, when that very day he sent for Gaspard, and spoke thus to him without manifesting a tittle of what he had in his head. "Son, I have received a letter from Merida, importing that if you choose to marry, you may have a maiden of that place, who is but fifteen years old, perfectly handsome, and mistress of a good fortune; if you have no reluctance to the marriage, we will set out early to-morrow for Merida, visit the lady who is proposed, and if you find her to your liking, you shall espouse her forthwith." Gaspard hearing mention made of a good fortune, which he thought was already in his clutches, answered without hesitation, that he was ready to go: so that next morning at day-break they departed by themselves, mounted on two good mules.

When they had got as far as the mountains of Fesira, into a place as much frequented by robbers as dreaded by travellers, Balthazar alighted, desiring his son to do the same: the young man obeyed, and asked the reason of their quitting their mules in that place. "I will tell thee, (answered the old man, darting at him a look in which his grief and indignation were painted;) we have no business at Merida; and the marriage which I mentioned is only a fable I invented to bring thee hither. I am not ignorant, ungrateful and unnatural son! I am not ignorant of the crime which thou hast hatched; I know that I am to be presented with poison prepared by thee: but, fool that thou art, dost thou flatter thyself that thou canst deprive me of my life in that manner with impunity? Thou art mistaken: thy guilt would soon be discovered, and thou wouldst perish by the hand of the hangman. There is (added he) a surer method of satiating thy revenge, without exposing thyself to an inglorious death: we are here without witnesses, in a place where murders are committed every day: since thou art so estranged from my blood, plunge thy poniard into my bosom, and the murder will be imputed to robbers." So saying, Balthazar baring his breast, and pointing to his heart, "Here Gaspard, (added he,) strike the mortal blow, and punish me for having given being to such a wretch as thee."

Young Velasquez, thunderstruck at these words, far from seeking to justify himself, fell, without sense or motion, at his father's feet. The good old man seeing him in that condition, which seemed to be the beginning of repentance, could not help yielding to his paternal weakness, and of flying to his assistance: but Gaspard no sooner recovered the use of his reason, than, being unable to bear the presence of a father so justly incensed, he made an effort to get up, mounted his mule, and rode off without speaking a word. Balthazar let him go, and leaving him to the remorse of his own conscience, returned to Cordova, where, six months after, he learned that his son had thrown himself into the monastery of Carthusians at Seville, there to pass the rest of his days in penitence.

## CHAPTER XII.

### The conclusion of Scipio's history.

BAD example sometimes produces good effects. The conduct of young Velasquez made me reflect seriously upon my own: I began to combat my thievish inclinations, and live like an honest man. The habit of seizing all the money I could lay my hands on was so much confirmed in me by repeated acts, that it was not easily vanquished. Nevertheless, I did not despair of succeeding, imagining that to become virtuous required only a sincere desire of being so. I therefore undertook this great work, and heaven seemed to bless my efforts. I no longer beheld the old merchant's strong box with a covetous eye; and I believe that, had it been in my power, I should not have touched one of his bags: I own, however, that it would have been very imprudent in him to put my infant integrity to such a proof; and therefore Velasquez took care not to do it.

Don Manriquez de Medrano, a young gentleman, and knight of the order of Alcantara, came frequently to our house. We had his custom; and if he was not the best, he was, at least, the most noble of those who used the shop. I had the good fortune to please that cavalier, who, every time he met me, encouraged me to speak and seemed to listen with pleasure to what I said. "Scipio, (said he one day,) if I had a lackey of thy humor, I should think myself in possession of a treasure; and if thou didst not belong to a man for whom I have a regard, I would do my endeavor to

debauch thee from his service." "Sir, (said I,) you would find it a very easy task; for I have an inclination to serve people of quality; that is my foible; I am charmed by their easy behavior." "If that be the case, (replied Don Manriquez,) I will desire Signior Balhazar to consent to thy leaving him, and coming into my service; I don't believe he will refuse me that favor." Indeed, Velasquez granted it the more easily, as he did not think the loss of a roguish lacquey irreparable; for my own part, I was glad of the change; the valet of a citizen appearing to me a mere beggar in comparison to the lacquey of a knight of Alcantara.

To draw a faithful picture of my new patron, I must tell you that he was a cavalier endowed with a most amiable person, and with such sweetness of temper and cultivated understanding as captivated every body who knew him; besides, he had a great deal of courage and probity, and wanted nothing but fortune. Being cadet of a family more illustrious than rich, he was obliged to subsist at the expense of an old aunt who lived at Toledo, and who, loving him as her own son, took care to furnish him with what money he wanted; he went always handsomely dressed, and was perfectly well received every where. He visited the principal ladies of the city, and among others, the Marchioness of Almenara, a widow of seventy-two years of age; who, by her engaging behavior and agreeable wit, allured the whole nobility of Cordova to her house. Men as well as women delighted in her conversation, and her family was styled the polite company.

My master, who was one of the most assiduous visitors of that lady, came home from her house one evening with an enraptured look that was not natural to him: upon which I said, "Signior, you seem to be strangely elevated: may your faithful servant ask the cause? hath not something extraordinary happened?" The knight smiled at that question, and owned he was actually engrossed by a serious conversation which he had enjoyed with the Marchioness of Almenara. "I heartily wish (said I laughing) that the superannuated toad may have made a declaration of love to you." "Jesting apart, (answered he,) know, my friend, that I am really beloved by the marchioness." "Chevalier, (said she to me,) I know the smallness of your fortune as well as the nobleness of your birth; I have an inclination for you, and am resolved to make you easy in your circumstances, by marrying you, as I cannot decently make your fortune any other way. I know very well that this marriage will bring upon me the ridicule of the world; that scandal will be very busy at my expense; and that, in short, I shall pass for an old fool, who must needs have another husband. No matter; I intend to despise slander, in order to make you happy: all that I fear (added she,) is, that you may possibly have a reluctance to comply with my intentions." This (continued the knight) was the subject of her discourse, which surprised me the more, as she is the most virtuous and prudent woman in Cordova. I answered, therefore, I was astonished she should do me the honor of offering me her hand; she who had always persisted in the resolution of preserving her widowhood to the last: to this she replied, that having a considerable estate, she should be glad in her lifetime to share it with a man of honor, whom she esteemed." "You are then, I suppose, (said I,) determined to hazard the leap?" "Canst thou doubt it? (he replied.) The marchioness possesses immense wealth, together with excellent qualities both of the heart and head; and I must have lost my judgment indeed, if I rejected such an advantageous settlement."

I very much approved of my master's design to lay hold of this fair occasion to make his fortune, and even advised him to push matters, so much was I afraid to see his inclinations change. Luckily, the lady, who had the affair still more at heart than I had, gave such expeditious orders, that the preparations were soon made for her marriage. As soon as it was known at Cordova that the old Marchioness of Almenara was going to marry young Don Manriquez de Medrano, the wits began to make themselves merry at the widow's expense; but in vain did they exhaust their stock of raillery; they could not divert her from her design: she let the whole city talk, and followed her knight to the altar: their nuptials were celebrated with such splendor as afforded new matter for scandal. "The bride (said they) might have, at least, for the sake of decency, suppressed all noise and pomp, which but ill becomes old widows who marry young husbands."

The marchioness, instead of appearing ashamed of being, at her age, wife to the chevalier, indulged herself, without constraint, in the joy which she felt on this occasion: she had a grand entertainment at her house, accompanied by a concert of music, and the feast ended in a ball, at which were present all the nobility of Cordova. Towards the end of the ball, our new-married couple slipped off and met in an apartment, where being shut up with a waiting-woman and me, the marchioness addressed herself to my master in these words: "Don Manriquez, this is your apartment; mine is in another part of the house: we will pass the night in separate chambers, and in the day we will live together like mother and son." The knight was, at first, mistaken, and believed that the lady talked thus, only to engage him to offer soft violence to her delicacy; imagining, therefore, that he ought, out of pure politeness, to act the passionate lover, he approached her, and eagerly endeavored to serve her in quality of valet de chambre; but she, far from allowing him to undress her, pushed him away with a serious air, saying, "Hold, Don Manriquez; if you take me for one of those amorous old widows who marry again out of frailty, you are deceived. I did not espouse you to make you buy the advantages which you will reap from our contract of marriage; these are the pure offerings of my heart, and I exact nothing in return but sentiments of friendship." So saying, she left my master and me in our apartment, and retired into her own, with her waiting-maid, absolutely forbidding the chevalier to follow her.

After her retreat, we remained a good while confounded at what we had heard. "Scipio, (said my master,) didst thou ever hear such a discourse as that of the marchioness? What dost thou think of such a lady?" "I think, Sir, (answered I,) that she has not her fellow; you are happy in having such a wife, which is like the possession of a benefice without cure of souls." "As for my part (replied Don Manriquez), I admire a spouse of such an inestimable character, and I intend to compensate, with all imaginable attention, the sacrifice which she makes to her delicacy." Having conversed some time about the lady, we went to rest; I upon a truckle-bed, in a wardrobe, and my master in a fine bed prepared for him, where, I believe, at bottom, he was not sorry to lie alone, and to be quit for his fear only.

The rejoicings began again next day, and the new-married lady appeared in such good humor, as to afford scope to the ravers. She was the first to laugh at what they said; nay, even excited others to laugh, by receiving their sallies with a good grace. The knight, for his part, seemed no less satisfied with his spouse; and by the tender glances with which he looked and spoke to her, one would have thought that old age was his taste: this happy couple had in the evening a new conversation, in which it was decided, that, without disturbing one another, they should live, for the future, in the same manner as before marriage: meanwhile, I must do Don Manriquez the justice to say, that, out of consideration for his wife, he did what few husbands would have done in his place: he abandoned a girl in the city, whom he loved, and by whom he was beloved; being resolved (as he said) to maintain no commerce which would seem to insult the delicate conduct of his wife towards him.

While he gave this old lady such strong marks of gratitude, she repaid them with usury, though she was ignorant of this behavior, and made him master of her strong box, which was even better replenished than that of Velasquez: as she had retrenched her housekeeping during her widowhood, she put it again on the same footing on which it had been in the lifetime of her first husband: she increased the number of her servants, filled her stable with horses and mules; in a word, by her generosity, the chevalier, who was the poorest, became the richest knight of Alcantara. You will ask, perhaps, what I got by all this? I received fifty pistoles from my mistress, and one hundred from my master, who, moreover, made me his secretary, with an appointment of five hundred crowns; he had even so much confidence in my integrity, that he created me his treasurer.

"His treasurer" (cried I, interrupting Scipio with a loud laugh.) "Yes, Sir (he replied, with a dry serious look), no less than his treasurer; and I'll venture to say that I acquitted myself in that employment with honor. True it is, I am, perhaps, somewhat indebted for cash; for, as I took my wages per advance, and quitted the knight's service suddenly, it is not impossible that I may now be in arrears: at any rate, it is the last reproach that I have deserved, having always acted with probity since that time."

I was, therefore, (continued the son of Coscolina,) secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez, who seemed as well satisfied with me as I was with him; when he received a letter from Toledo, importing that his aunt Donna Theodora Moscoso was at the point of death. He set out instantly to see that lady, who had been a mother to him for many years; and I accompanied him in this journey, together with a valet de chambre and one lacquey. Being all mounted on the best horses in our stables, we soon got to Toledo, where we found Donna Theodora in such a condition as gave us hopes that she would not die of that distemper; and truly our prognostic, though contrary to that of an old physician who attended her, was verified by the event.

While the health of our good aunt was re-establishing, less, perhaps, by the remedies she took, than by the presence of her dear nephew, Mr. Treasurer passed his time as agreeably as he could, with young people, whose acquaintance soon introduced him to occasions of spending his money. They sometimes carried me to the tennis-court, where they engaged me in play; and as I was not so expert a gamester as my master Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. I conceived insensibly an inclination for play; and if I had entirely abandoned myself to that passion, it would, doubtless, have compelled me to take from our cash some quarters of my allowance per advance; but luckily, love saved both my own virtue and my master's money. One day, as I passed by the church de los Reyes, I perceived, through a lattice, the curtains of which were withdrawn, a young maid, who seemed rather a divinity than a mortal. I would use a term still stronger, if there was any, to denote the impression which she made upon my heart. I made it my business to get information about her, and, by dint of inquiry, learned that her name was Beatrice, and that she was waiting-maid to Donna Julia, second daughter of the Count de Poian.

Beatrice interrupted Scipio with a loud laugh; then addressing herself to my wife, "Beautiful Antonia (said she), pray look steadfastly on me. Don't you think I have the air of a divinity?" "You had at that time in my eyes, (said Scipio to her;) and since I no longer suspect your fidelity, you seem to me fairer than ever." My secretary, after such a gallant repartee, pursued his history thus.

This discovery quite inflamed me: not indeed with a legitimate ardor, for I imagined that I should easily triumph over her virtue, by presents capable of shaking it; but I judged amiss of the chaste Beatrice. In vain did I offer her (by means of mercenary women) my purse and affection: she rejected my proposal with disdain. Her resistance increased my desires. I had recourse to the last expedient, and offered my hand, which she accepted when she knew that I was secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez. As we thought it convenient to conceal our marriage for some time, we were wedded privately, in presence of Dame Lorenza

Stephora, governess of Seraphina, and some other domestics belonging to the Count de Poian. As soon as I had married Beatrice, she facilitated the means of seeing and conversing with her at night in the garden, into which I introduced myself by a little door, of which she gave me the key. Never were man and wife happier in one another than Beatrice and I. We waited with equal impatience for the hour of rendezvous, ran thither with equal eagerness; and the time which we spent together, though it was sometimes pretty long, seemed but a moment to both.

One night, which was as fatal to me as the others had been propitious, I was surprised, at entering the garden, to find the little door open. I was alarmed by this uncommon event, from whence I conceived a bad omen. I grew pale and trembled, as if I had foreseen what was to happen; and advancing in the dark towards an arbor where I used to converse with my wife, I heard the voice of a man. I stooped all of a sudden to listen, and my ear was immediately saluted with these words, "Don't let me languish then, my dear Beatrice! complete my happiness, and consider that your fortune is connected with it." Instead of having patience to hear him to an end, I thought there was no occasion for knowing more. A jealous fury took possession of my soul; and breathing nothing but vengeance, I drew my sword, and went hastily into the arbor. "Ah! cowardly seducer, (cried I,) whosoever thou art, thou shalt sooner deprive me of life than rob me of my honor." So saying, I attacked the cavalier who was talking to Beatrice. He put himself immediately into a posture of defence, and fought like a man who understood the art much better than I, who had only received a few lessons at Cordova. Nevertheless, swordsmen as he was, I made a push which he could not parry, or rather his foot slipped. I saw him fall; and imagining that I had wounded him mortally, fled as fast as my legs could carry me, without answering Beatrice, who called me.

"Yes, really, (said his wife, interrupting him,) I called in order to undeceive him. The cavalier with whom I conversed was no other than Don Ferdinand de Leyva. That nobleman, who loved my mistress, Julia, had formed a resolution of carrying her off by force, believing it impossible to obtain her by any other means; and I myself had given him a meeting in the garden, to concert with him the steps of that undertaking, on which he assured me my fortune depended: but in vain did I call my husband; he avoided me as a wife that had been unfaithful to him."

My situation at that time was such (resumed Scipio) as rendered me capable of committing any thing. Those who know by experience what jealousy is, and to what extravagance it drives the soundest understandings, will not be surprised at the disorder which it produced in my weak brain. I underwent a momentary transition from one extreme to another. I felt the emotions of hatred succeed those of tenderness, which I had entertained for my wife a moment before, and made an oath to abandon and banish her for ever from my memory. Besides, I thought I had killed a cavalier; and in that opinion, being afraid of falling into the hand of justice, suffered that inconceivable anxiety which incessantly pursues, like a fury, the man who has done a bad action. In this horrible situation, my whole care being to escape, I did not go home, but instantly quitted Toledo, having no other baggage than the clothes on my back. True, indeed, I had in my pocket sixty pistoles, which were a pretty good resource to a young man who proposed to live all his life in service.

I walked all night long, or rather ran; for the images of aguzzais, which continually haunted my imagination, supplied me still with new vigor; and the morning surprised me between Rodillas and Maqueda. When I arrived at this last town, finding myself a little fatigued, I went into the church as soon as it was open, and after having put up a short prayer, sat down upon a bench to rest me. I began to muse upon my present situation, which, heaven knows, was perplexing enough; but I had not time to make long reflections. I heard the church echo with two or three smacks of a whip, which making me conclude that a carrier was passing, I got up immediately to see whether or not I was mistaken; and by that time I got to the door, perceived one, who being mounted on a mule, led two more in a leash. "Stop, friend (said I to him,) where are these mules going?" "To Madrid (answered he). I came hither with two good Dominican monks, and am going back myself."

The opportunity that offered of travelling to Madrid inspired me with an inclination to go thither. I made a bargain with the carrier, mounted one of his mules, and we pushed forward for Illescas, where we were to sleep. Scarcely had we got out of Maqueda, when the carrier, who was a man between thirty-five and forty years of age, thundered out church-singing with vast vociferation: he began with the prayers which the canons sing at matins, then sung the *Credo* as it is sung at high mass, and passing on to vespers, pronounced them, without even sparing the Magnificat. Although the rogue stunned me with his noise, I could not help laughing, and even encouraged him to continue, when he was obliged to stop and take breath. "Courage, friend, (said I to him,) pray go on: if heaven hath given you good lungs, I see you don't put them to a bad use." "No, indeed, (cried he,) I am not, thank God, like the most part of carriers, who sing nothing but infamous or impious songs: I would not even repeat ballads made upon our wars with the Moors; for these are things at least frivolous, if not wicked." "You have (said I) a purity of heart rarely to be met with among mulattoes: with this extreme delicacy in the choice of your songs, have you likewise made a vow of chastity, with regard to the young wenches who live at ease upon the road?" "Certainly, (answered he,) continence is another thing on which I pique myself in these sort of places, where I mind nothing but my mules." I was a little astonished to



hear this phoenix of carriers talk in such a manner: and looking upon him as a man of honesty and discretion, entered into a conversation with him, after he had sung his fill.

We arrived at Illescas in the twilight, where, alighting at an inn, I left the care of the mules to my companion, and went into the kitchen, where I ordered the landlord to prepare a good supper. "This he promised to do so effectually, that I should remember I had lodged at his house the longest day I had to live." "Ask, (said he,) ask your carrier what sort of a man I am. Ecce! I will defy all the cooks of Madrid and Toledo to make an olla podrida comparable to those that I compose. I will treat you this night with a ragout of rabbit dressed in my manner, and you shall see whether or not I have reason to boast of my skill." Thereupon, showing me a saucepan, wherein there was (as he said), a young rabbit already minced: "There (added he) is what I intend to give you. When I have once put in some pepper, salt, wine, a handful of sweet herbs, and other ingredients which I use in my sauces, I ought to serve you, in a little time, with a ragout worthy of a judge."

The landlord, after having thus sounded his own praise, began to dress supper; and while it was doing, I went into the hall, where finding a kind of couch, I lay down, to sleep of my fatigue, having had no rest the night before. In two hours the carrier waking me, said, "Master, your supper is ready; come, if you please, and sit down at table." There was one in another room with two covers, at which my fellow-traveller and I sitting down, the ragout was served. I attacked it with a greedy appetite, and found it of an exquisite relish, whether hunger made me judge too favorably of it, or that my satisfaction was the effect of the cook's skill. We had also a plate of roast mutton; and I remarking that the carrier did honor to this last dish only, asked why he abstained from the other. He answered with a smile, that he did not love ragouts. This reply, or rather the smile with which it was accompanied, seeming to me mysterious, "You conceal (said I) the true reason that hinders you from eating the ragout; pray, do me the pleasure of letting me know it." "Since you are so curious to know it, (he replied,) I will tell you, that I have loathed all these sorts of ragouts, since, in going once from Toledo to Gueneca, they brought me for supper at an inn a hashed cat instead of a rabbit, and that gave me a disgust to all felineas."

The carrier had no sooner spoke these words, than, in spite of the hunger that devoured me, my appetite forsook me all of a sudden. I took it in my head that I had eaten of a pretended rabbit, and could no longer look at the ragout without making wry faces. My companion did not cure me of this conjecture, when he told me, that it was a common thing among the innkeepers of Spain, as well as the pastry-cooks, to substitute that quid pro quo. This discourse, you see, was very consoling; and therefore I had not the least inclination to return to the ragout, nor even to touch the roast meat, lest the mutton might be as much sophisticated as the rabbit. I rose from table, cursing the ragout, the landlord, and his inn; and lying down again upon my settee, passed the rest of the night more quietly than I had expected. Next morning early, after having paid the landlord as handsomely as if I had been extremely well treated, I departed from Illescas, my imagination still so full of the ragout, that I fancied every animal which I saw was a cat.

I arrived in good time at Madrid, where, as soon as I had missed my carrier, I hired a small room near the Sun-gate. Mine eyes, though accustomed to quality, were dazzled by the great concourse of noblemen who usually appeared in the court end of the town. I admired the prodigious quantity of coaches, and the infinite number of gentlemen, pages, and lacques who attended the great. My admiration redoubled, when going to the king's levee, I beheld that monarch surrounded by his courtiers. I was charmed at the sight, and said within myself, "I am no longer surprised at what I have heard, that one cannot possibly conceive the magnificence of the court of Madrid without being an eye-witness of it: I am overjoyed at my coming hither, where I foresee I shall be able to do something." All that I could perform, however, was to contract a few unprofitable acquaintances. I gradually spent all my money, and thought myself very lucky in having an opportunity of bestowing myself, with all my merit, upon a pedant of Salamanca, whom a family affair had brought to Madrid, where he was born, and with whom I grew acquainted by accident. I became his factotum: and when he returned to the university, followed him thither.

The name of my new patron was Don Ignacio de Ipiña; he assumed the Don, because he had been preceptor to a duke, who, by way of recompense, settled upon him a pension for life: he enjoyed another as emeritus professor of the college; and he drew yearly from the public a revenue of two or three hundred pistoles, by the books of dogmatical morality he printed. The manner in which he composed his works well deserves honorable mention. He spent almost all the day in reading Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, and in writing upon small squares of paper each apophthegm or brilliant thought which he met with. As these squares were filled, he employed me to string them upon wire, in form of a garland, and each garland made a volume. What a world of bad books did we compose! every month almost we finished two volumes, and immediately the press groaned with them. What was most surprising, he published these his compilations as performances entirely new; and if the critics thought proper to upbraid him with having pilaged the ancients, he would answer, with most haughty assurance, *Fuero letamur in ipso*.

He was also a great commentator; and there was so much erudition in his annotations, that he frequently made remarks on things scarce worthy to be observed, and sometimes wrote upon his paper squares passages from Herodotus and other authors, very little to the purpose. That I improved my under-

standing in the service of this virtuoso, it would be ungrateful in me to deny. I brought my hand-writing to perfection by dint of transcribing his works. And as in treating me like a pupil rather than a valet, he took care to cultivate my capacity; he was also far from neglecting my morals. "Scipio, (he would say, when he heard of any piece of knavery committed by a servant,) beware, my child, of following the bad example of that rogue; a valet ought to serve his master with equal fidelity and zeal." In a word, Don Ignacio lost no occasion of inculcating virtue in me; and his exhortation had such good effect, that I was never in the least tempted to play him a trick during the fifteen months which I spent in his house.

I have already observed, that Doctor de Ipiña was originally of Madrid, where he had a kinswoman called Catalina, chambermaid to the prince's nurse. This waiting-maid, who was the same whom I since made use of to procure Signior de Santillane's enlargement from the tower of Segovia, being desirous of doing a good office for Don Ignacio, engaged her mistress to ask a benefice for him from the Duke of Lerma. That minister granted him a nomination to the archdeaconry of Grenada, which, being a conquered country, is in the gift of the King. We set out for Madrid as soon as we learned this piece of news, the Doctor intending to thank his benefactress before he departed to Grenada. I had more than one opportunity of seeing and speaking to Catalina, who was pleased with my easy air and gay disposition. For my part, I found her so much to my liking, that I could not help making suitable returns to the little marks of friendship which she bestowed upon me. In fine, we contracted a mutual attachment. Forgive this confession, my dear Beatrice; as I believed you false, that mistake ought to screen me from your reproaches.

Meanwhile, Doctor Don Ignacio preparing for his departure to Grenada, his relation and I, frightened at the separation that threatened us, had recourse to an expedient which preserved us from that misfortune. I feigned myself sick, complained of my head and breast, and affected all the symptoms of a most violent distemper. My master called a physician, who, having examined me with care, sincerely owned that my distemper was a very serious matter; and that, in all likelihood, I should keep my chamber a long time.

The doctor, impatient to be at his cathedral, did not think proper to delay his departure, but took another young man into his service, leaving me to the care of a nurse, with whom he deposited a sum of money, to defray the expense of my funeral if I should die, or to recompense my service if I should recover of my disease. As soon as I understood that Don Ignacio was gone, all my complaints vanished. I got out of bed, dismissed my physician who had so much penetration, and got rid of my nurse, who stole more than half of the money with which she had been intrusted in my behalf. While I acted this part, Catalina performed another with her mistress Donna Anna de Guevara, whom, by persuading her that I was admirable in intrigues, she induced to choose me for one of her agents. Madam nurse, whom her avarice always stimulated to new undertakings, having occasion for such people, received me into her family; and in a little time put my abilities to the proof. She gave me commissions which required some address; and, without vanity, I did not acquit myself amiss. Wherefore, she was as well pleased with me as I had cause to be dissatisfied with her. This lady was so covetous, that she would not allow me the least share of the fruits which she reaped from my industry and trouble. She imagined that she acted with great generosity in paying my wages punctually. This excess of avarice would have soon induced me to quit her service, had I not been retained by the affection of Catalina, which kindled every day more and more, she proposed, in a formal manner, that I should take her to wife.

"Softly, my dear, (said I,) that ceremony cannot be performed between us so soon. I must first be convinced of the death of a young woman who got the start of you, and to whom (for my sins) I am married." "Not you, indeed, (replied Catalina,) you only say so to conceal, in a polite manner, the reluctance you have to wed me." In vain did I protest that I spoke the truth. She looked upon my sincere confession as a shift, and being offended at it, changed her behavior towards me. We did not quarrel, but our correspondence visibly cooled, and we no longer retained for one another any other sentiments than those of decency and common regard.

At this juncture, I heard that Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, secretary to the prime minister of the Spanish monarchy, wanted a lacquey; and this place flattered me the more, as it was represented the most agreeable one that I could possess. "Signior de Santillane (said people to me) is a person beloved by the Duke of Lerma, and of consequence cannot fail of pushing his fortune a great way; besides, he is very generous; so that, in managing his affairs, you will effectually improve your own." I did not neglect this opportunity. I went immediately, and presented myself to Signior Gil Blas, for whom at first sight I felt a growing inclination, and who admitted me into his service on account of my physiognomy. I did not hesitate in quitting the nurse for him; and, if it please heaven, he shall be my last master.

Here Scipio finished his history; then addressing himself to me, "Signior de Santillane, (said he,) pray witness for me to these ladies that you have always found me a zealous and faithful servant. I have need of your testimony to persuade them that the son of Coscolina has purged his morals, and that virtuous sentiments have succeeded his vicious inclination."

"Yes, ladies, (said I,) this is what I can answer for: if Scipio in his childhood was a real picaro, he has corrected his conduct so well since that time, that he is now the model of a perfect servant. Far from having cause to blame his be-

havior towards me, I must own that I lie under great obligations to him. The night on which I was apprehended, to be carried to the tower of Segovia, he saved from pillage, and secured a part of my effects, which he might have appropriated to himself with impunity. He not only preserved my money, but also, through pure friendship, came and shut himself up with me in prison, preferring the melancholy pleasure of sharing my sorrows to all the charms of liberty."

## BOOK XI.

## CHAPTER I.

*Gil Blas is overwhelmed with joy, which is disturbed by a melancholy event. Such changes happen at court as induce Santillane to go thither again.*

I HAVE already observed, that there was great harmony between Antonia and Beatrice; the last being used to live like a submissive waiting-woman, and the other habituating herself to act the mistress. Scipio and I were husbands of too much gallantry, and too well beloved by our wives, to be long without children: they grew pregnant almost at the same time. Beatrice, who was the first delivered, brought into the world a girl; and a few days after, Antonia crowned my happiness in bringing forth a boy. I sent my secretary to Valencia with this piece of news for the governor, who came to Liria with Seraphina, and the Marchioness of Piengo, to stand god-mothers to the children, being pleased to add this token of affection to those I had already received. My son, whose god-father and god-mother were that nobleman and the marchioness, was christened Alphonso; and my lady governor, willing that I should have the honor of being doubly her gossip, stood with me for Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of Seraphina.

Not only the people of my family were rejoiced at the birth of my son; the inhabitants of Liria likewise celebrated it by feasts, which showed that the whole village partook of their master's pleasure. But, alas! our rejoicings were not of long duration; or rather, they were all of a sudden converted into groans, complaints, and lamentations, by an event which more than twenty years have not been able to make me forget, and which will ever be present to my thoughts: my son died, and his mother, though safely delivered, soon followed him; a violent fever robbed me of my dear wife, fourteen months after we had been married. Let the reader conceive, if possible, the sorrow with which I was seized. I fell into a state of stupid dejection; and felt my loss so much, that I seemed quite insensible. I was in this condition five or six days, during which I would take no sustenance; and had it not been for Scipio, I believe I should either have let myself die of hunger, or have lost my reason entirely; but that dexterous secretary found means to beguile my grief, by conforming himself to it; he made me swallow broths, by the art of presenting them with such a mortified look, as if he gave them not so much with a view of preserving my life, as of nursing my affliction.

This affectionate servant, having written to Don Alphonso an account of my misfortune, and the deplorable situation in which I was, that tender and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, repaired immediately to Liria. I cannot, without being melted, recall the moment in which he presented himself to my view: "My dear Santillane! (said he, embracing me,) I am not come hither to console you; I am come to mourn with you for Antonia, as you would mourn with me had fate robbed me of my Seraphina." In effect, he shed tears, and mingled his sighs with mine: so that, overwhelmed as I was with sorrow, I had a lively sense of Don Alphonso's goodness.

This governor having had a long conference with Scipio about the means of vanquishing my grief, they concluded that I must, for some time, be removed from Liria, where every thing recalled incessantly to my mind the image of my poor Antonia. Upon this, Don Cesar's son proposed to carry me with him to Valencia, and my secretary seconded him so well, that I yielded to his proposal. I left Scipio and his wife at my house, every part of which indeed, served only to increase my affliction, and set out with the governor. When I arrived at Valencia, Don Cesar and his daughter-in-law spared nothing to divert my chagrin; they entertained me by turns with all the amusements that seemed proper to dispel it; but, in spite of all their endeavors, I continued, as much as ever, plunged in the most profound melancholy. It was not Scipio's fault that I did not resume my tranquillity; he came often from Liria to Valencia, to know how I was, and returned sad or gay, as he perceived me more or less disposed to receive consolation.

One morning, entering my chamber, "Sir, (said he, with great emotion,) there is a report in the city, which interests the whole kingdom; it is said that Philip the Third is no more, and that the Prince his son is now upon the throne; nay more, (added he,) that the Cardinal Duke of Lerma has lost his post: that he is even forbid the court, and that Don Gaspar de Guzman, Count d'Olivarez, is now prime minister." I felt myself agitated by this piece of news, without knowing wherefore; and Scipio, perceiving it, asked if I was any how affected by this great change? "Why should it affect me, my child? (said I.) I have quitted the court, and ought to look with indifference upon all the changes that can happen there."

"For a man of your age, (replied the son of Coscolina,)

• Don Gaspar de Guzman, Duke of St. Lucar de Barrameda, and Count d'Olivarez, upon the death of Philip the Third, and disservice of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, became prime minister to Philip the Fourth, and enjoyed, at one time, the posts of great chamberlain, high chancellor of the Indies, treasurer-general of Aragon, supreme counsellor of state, chief master of the horse, captain-general of the whole Spanish cavalry, and governor of Guipuscoa.

you are very much detached from the world: were I in your place, I should have a longing desire to go to Madrid, and show my face to the young monarch, to see if he would remember me; this is a pleasure in which I would indulge myself." "I understand thee, (said I); thou wouldst have me return to court, to try fortune anew, or rather to grow ambitious and covetous again." "Why should your morals be corrupted? (answered Scipio:) have more confidence in your own virtue; I will answer for your conduct; the wholesome reflections which you made upon the court, during your disgrace, will screen you from the perils of it; re-embark boldly upon a sea, the shelves of which you are so well acquainted with." "Peace, flatterer! (said I, interrupting him with a smile,) art thou tired of seeing me lead a quiet life? I thought thou hadst a greater regard for my repose."

In this part of our conversation, Don César and his son coming in, confirmed the news of the King's death, as well as the Duke of Lerma's misfortune; they moreover told me, that this minister having asked leave to return to Rome, it was refused, and he was ordered to repair to his marquisate at Denia; then, as if they had been in concert with my secretary, they advised me to go to Madrid, and present myself to the new King, since I was known to him, and had even done him such service as the great always recompense with pleasure. "As for my part, (said Don Alphonso,) I don't doubt but he will be grateful, and that Philip the Fourth will pay the debts of the Prince of Spain." "I am of the same opinion, (said Don César,) and look upon Santillane's journey to court as an occasion for him to arrive at great preferment."

"Truly, gentlemen, (cried I,) you don't consider what you say: to hear you, one would think I had nothing to do but to repair to Madrid, in order to have the golden key, or some government, conferred upon me: you are mistaken; I am, on the contrary, persuaded, that the King would take no notice of my person were I to present myself to his view: I will do it, if you desire, in order to disabuse you." The noblemen of Leyva took me at my word, and I could not help promising that I would immediately set out for Madrid. As soon as my secretary saw me determined on the journey, he felt an immoderate joy: he imagined that I should no sooner appear before the new monarch, than that prince would distinguish me in the crowd, and load me with honors and wealth: thereupon, feeding his fancy with the most splendid chimeras, he raised me to the first offices of the state, and preferred himself by the help of my elevation.

I got ready, therefore, to return to court, not with a view of sacrificing again to Fortune, but to satisfy Don César and his son, who imagined that I should soon possess the favor of my sovereign. True it is, I myself felt at bottom some desire of trying if the young prince would know me again: attracted by this emotion of curiosity, without hope or design of reaping any advantage from the new reign, I departed with Scipio for Madrid, leaving the care of my house to Beatrice, who was an excellent economist.

## CHAPTER II.

*Gil Blas arrives at Madrid, and appears at court: the king remembers him, and recommends him to his prime minister. The consequence of that recommendation.*

We gained Madrid in less than eight days, Don Alphonso having accommodated us with two of his best horses, that we might make the greater dispatch; and we alighted at a furnished house, where I lodged before, belonging to Vincent Forrero, my old landlord, who was very glad to see me again.

As this was a man who piqued himself upon knowing every thing that happened, both at court and city, I asked if there was any thing new. "A great many things, (answered he.) Since the death of Philip the Third, the friends and partisans of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma have bestirred themselves to maintain his enmity in the ministry; but their efforts have been ineffectual: the Count d'Olivarez has got the better of them all. It is said that Spain loses nothing by the change, and that the new prime minister has a genius of such vast extent, that he is able to govern the whole world: heaven preserve him! What is certain, (added he,) is, that the people have conceived the highest opinion of his capacity; and we shall see, in the end, whether the Duke of Lerma is well or ill replaced." Forrero having thus opened, gave me an account of all the changes which had been made at court since the Count d'Olivarez steered the helm of the monarchy.

Two days after my arrival at Madrid, I went to court in the afternoon, and put myself in the King's way as he went into his closet: but he did not look at me. I returned next day to the same place, but was not more fortunate. The third time, he cast his eyes upon me as he passed, but seemed to take no notice of my person; whereupon I came to a determination, and said to Scipio, who accompanied me, "Thou seest that the King does not remember me; or if he does, has no mind to renew the acquaintance: I believe it will not be amiss for us to set out upon our return to Valencia." "Not so fast, Sir, (replied my secretary;) you know better than I, that success at court is only to be obtained by patience: don't cease showing yourself to the Prince; by dint of perseverance in appearing before him, you will oblige him to consider you more attentively, and to recall the features of his agent with the fair Catalina."

That Scipio might have nothing to reproach me with, I had the complaisance to continue the same conduct during three weeks; and one day, at length, the monarch, struck with my appearance, ordered me to be called in; and I entered his closet not without great disorder, to find myself tête-à-tête with my sovereign. "Who are you? (said he;) I remember your face, but cannot recollect where I have seen

you." "Sir, answered I, trembling,) I had the honor to conduct your majesty, one night, with the Count de Lemos, to the house of—" "Oh! I remember it, (said the Prince, interrupting me;) you were secretary to the Duke of Lerma, and, if I am not mistaken, your name is Santillane. I have not forgot that you served me with abundance of zeal on the occasion, and that you were very ill rewarded for your pains: was not you imprisoned for that adventure?" "Yes, Sir, (said I,) I was six months in the tower of Segovia, from whence your goodness delivered me." "That (answered he) does not acquit me of the obligation; it is not enough to set you at liberty, I ought to recompense you for the misfortune which you suffered for love of me."

Just as the prince had pronounced these words, the Count d'Olivarez entered the closet. A favorite takes umbrage at every thing: he was astonished to find a stranger there; and the King redoubled his surprise, in saying to him, "Count, I recommend this young man to you; employ him in some shape or other, and take care of his advancement." The minister affected to receive this order with a gracious look, eyeing me from head to foot, and very anxious to know who I was. "Go, friend, (said the monarch to me, making a sign for me to retire,) the Count will not fail to employ you in an advantageous manner, both for my service and your own interest."

I immediately quitted the closet, and rejoined the son of Coscolina, who, extremely impatient to know what the King had said to me, remained in the utmost agitation. He asked me forthwith, whether we must return to Valencia or stay at court? "Thou shalt judge, (said I;) then I overwhelmed him with joy, in recounting to him, word for word, the short conversation which I had with the King. "My dear master, (said Scipio to me, when he had heard it,) will you distrust my almanacs again? Confess that the Lords of Leyva and I were not to blame in exhorting you to take a trip to Madrid. I already see you in some eminent part; you will become the Caladrona of Count d'Olivarez." "That is not at all what I wish, (said I, interrupting him;) I have no ambition for a place which is environed with so many precipices. I would rather have an employment in which I should have no occasion to do injustice, or carry on a shameful traffic of my prince's favors: after the use I made of my past credit, I cannot be too much upon my guard against avarice and ambition." "Come, Sir, (replied my secretary,) the minister will give you some good post, which you may fill without ceasing to be an honest man."

More urged by Scipio than by my own curiosity, I went next day to the house of Count d'Olivarez before sunrise, having been informed that every morning, in summer and winter, he gave audience by candle-light. I modestly took my station in the corner of the hall, from whence I narrowly observed the Count when he appeared; for I had but a superficial view of him in the King's closet: he was taller than the middle size, and might have passed for a fat man in a country where we see none almost but lean people: his shoulders were so high, that I thought him hunch-backed, though he was not so: his head, which was extremely large, hung down upon his breast; his hair was black and straight, his visage long, his complexion of an olive colour, his mouth sunk in, and his chin peaked and turned upwards at the end.\*

All this together could not make a very handsome appearance; nevertheless, as I believed him to be well disposed towards me, I looked upon him with a favorable eye, and even found him agreeable. True it is, he treated every body with an affable and pleasant air, and very graciously received the memorials which were presented to him; and this seemed to supply the place of a good person. Meanwhile, when I advanced in my turn to salute him, and make myself known, he darted a rude and threatening look at me; then turning his back without deigning to hear me, returned into his closet. I now thought him more ugly than he was naturally, went out of the hall very much confounded at such an unfavorable reception, and did not know what to think of the matter.

Having rejoined Scipio, who waited for me at the door, "Dost thou know (said I) what reception I have met with?" "No, (answered he;) but it is not difficult to guess: the minister, ready to conform himself to the pleasure of his prince, has doubtless offered you some considerable employment." "There you are mistaken, (I replied;) telling him, at the same time, in what manner I had been received. Having listened attentively, he said, "The Count must have forgotten you, or mistaken you for somebody else: I advise you to wait on him again, and I am sure he will treat you with another sort of look." I followed my secretary's advice, and presented myself the second time before the minister, who treated me still worse than the first, frowned on me, as if the sight of me had given him pain, turned his eyes another way, and retired without speaking one word.

I was touched to the quick by his behavior, and tempted to depart immediately for Valencia: but this, Scipio did not fail to oppose; being unwilling to renounce the hopes which he had conceived. "Dost thou not see (said I to him) that the Count wants to remove me from court? The King has expressed to him some regard for me, and that is sufficient to bring upon me the aversion of his favourite; let us yield, my child, let us yield with a good grace to the power of such a formidable foe." "Sir, (answered he, incensed against the Count d'Olivarez,) I would not so easily quit my ground; I would go and complain to his majesty of the little regard which the minister shows to his recommendation." "Bad counsel, my friend, (said I;) if I should take that imprudent step, I would soon repent it; nay, I believe I run some risk in tarrying in this city."

\* It was probably on account of this disadvantageous figure that he commonly gave audience from his coach, or received people sitting.

My secretary began to weigh these words, and considering that we had actually to do with a man who might make us visit the tower of Segovia, he partook of my fear, and no longer opposed my desire of quitting Madrid, from whence I resolved to move the very next day.

## CHAPTER III.

*Gil Blas is hindered from executing his resolution to leave the court, and receives an important piece of service from Joseph Navarro.*

On my return to my lodging, I met my old friend Joseph Navarro, clerk of the kitchen to Don Baltazar de Zuniga. I went up to him, saluted him, and asked if he knew me, and if he would still be so good as to speak to a wretch who had repaid his friendship with ingratitude. "You confess then (said he) that you have not used me extremely well?"

"Yes, (answered I;) and you have a right to load me with reproaches: I deserve them all, if I have not already expiated my crime by the remorse which attended it." "Since you have repented of your fault, (replied Navarro, embracing me,) I ought no longer to remember it." I, on my part, hugged Joseph in my arms; and we resumed our former sentiments for each other.

He had heard of my imprisonment and the disorder of my affairs, but was ignorant of what followed. I informed him of all, and even recounted to him the conversation I had with the King; not concealing the bad reception I had met with from the minister, no more than my design of retiring again to my solitude. "Beware of going thither, (said he,) since our monarch has expressed a friendship for you, it must certainly be of some service. Between you and me, the Count d'Olivarez has a very singular disposition, and is full of whims: he sometimes, as on this occasion, acts in a very unaccountable manner; and nobody but himself has the key of his irregular behavior. Finally, whatever reasons he may have for receiving you in this manner, stick close to the business; he will not hinder you from profiting by the prince's bounty: this is what I assure you: I will mention it this evening to Signior Don Baltazar de Zuniga, my master, who is uncle to the Count d'Olivarez, and shares with him the cares of government." Navarro having told me this, asked a direction to my lodging; and so we parted.

It was not long before I saw him again. Coming to me next day, "Signior de Santillane, (said he,) you have a protector in my master, who will favor you with his support. On account of the good character which I gave of you, he has promised to speak in your behalf to his nephew the Count d'Olivarez, whom I hope he will prepossess in your favor." My friend Navarro, who did not serve me by halves, introduced me two days after to Don Baltazar,\* who said to me with a courteous look, "Signior de Santillane, your friend Joseph has spoke so well of you, as to engage me in your interests." I made a profound bow to Signior de Zuniga; and answered, that I should all my life have a lively sense of the obligation I lay under to Navarro, for having procured for me the protection of a minister who was justly styled the light of the council. Don Baltazar, at this flattering reply, clapt me on the shoulder, saying with a smile, "You may go again to-morrow to the levee of the Count d'Olivarez, with whom you will be better satisfied than before."

I appeared, therefore, the third time, before the prime minister; who, having distinguished me in the crowd, honored me with a smiling look, from whence I conceived a good omen. "This goes well, (said I to myself;) the uncle has made the nephew hear reason." I now expected a favorable reception; and my expectation was fulfilled: the Count, after having given audience to every body, sent for me to his closet, where he said to me with a familiar air, "Friend Santillane, forgive me for having thrown thee into perplexity for my diversion; I pleased myself with giving thee uneasiness, in order to try thy prudence, and see what thou wouldst do in thy chagrin. I don't doubt that thou thoughtest I was displeased with thee: but, on the contrary, my child, I own I have a liking to thy person. Though the King, my master, had not ordered me to take care of thy fortune, I should have done it through pure inclination. Besides, my uncle Don Baltazar de Zuniga, to whom I can refuse nothing, has desired me to look upon thee as one for whom he interests himself: this is enough to determine me in thy favor." This declaration made such a strong impression upon my senses, that they were quite disordered. I threw myself at the feet of the minister, who having bid me rise, went on in this manner: "Come hither again this afternoon, and call for my steward, who will impart to thee the orders I shall give him." So saying, his excellency went out to hear mass, as he usually did every day after having given audience; and then repaired to the King's levee.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Gil Blas acquires the love of Count d'Olivarez.*

I DID not fail to return in the afternoon, and call for the steward, whose name was Don Raymond Caporis. I so soon told him my name, than, saluting me with great demonstrations of respect, "Signior (said he), follow me, if you please: I will conduct you to the apartment which is destined for you in this house." So saying, he carried me by a little stair to a range of five or six rooms, which composed the second story of one wing of the house, and which were very plainly furnished. "This (said he) is the lodging which his Grace appoints for you; and here you will have a table with six covers, maintained at his expense. You will be

\* Don Baltazar de Zuniga, Count de Monterosa, was great commander of Leon, governor to Philip the Fourth, King of Spain, ambassador at Rome and Vienna, and president of the Italian Council.

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served by his own domestics, and there will always be a coach at your command. This is not all, (added he,) his excellency has ordered me to treat you with the same respect as if you was of the family of Guzman." "What the deuce is the meaning of all this?" (said I to myself.) How am I to understand these distinctions? Is there not some mischief at bottom? and is it not for his diversion that the minister gives me such honorable treatment?" While I was in this uncertainty, fluctuating between hope and fear, a page came and told me that the Count wanted me. I went instantly to his Grace, who being alone in his closet, "Well, Santillane, (said he,) art thou satisfied with thy apartment, and the orders which I have given to Don Raymond?" "The goodness of your excellency (answered I) seems to be excessive: and I receive it with fear and trembling." "For what reason?" (said he.) Can I do too much honor to a man whom the King has recommended to my care? No, indeed: I do no more than my duty in treating thee in an honorable manner: be not therefore surprised at what I do for thee; and be assured, that a solid and splendid fortune cannot escape thee, provided thou art as much attached to me as thou wast to the Duke of Lerma. But with regard to that nobleman (added he), I have been told that you lived in great familiarity with him. I am curious to know how you two became acquainted, and what employment you exercised under that minister: deign me nothing: I insist upon hearing the whole truth." I then remembered my perplexity with the Duke of Lerma, in the same case, and in what manner I extricated myself; and this I practised again very successfully: that is to say, in my narration I softened the rough places, and passed slightly over those places which did not much redound to my honor: I likewise spared the Duke of Lerma; though in doing otherwise I should have better pleased my hearer. As for Don Rodrigo de Calderona, I gave him no quarter, but disclosed all the fine strokes which I knew hestruck in the traffic of commanderies, governments, and benefices.

"What you tell me of Calderona, (said the minister, interrupting me,) is conformable to several memorials which have been presented against him, and which contain heads of accusation still more important. His trial will soon come on; and if you wish his downfall, I believe your desire will be satisfied." "I don't desire his death, (said I); though it was not his fault that I found not mine in the tower of Segovia, where he was the cause of my being imprisoned for a good many months." "How! (cried his excellency,) was Don Rodrigo the cause of thy imprisonment? this is what I did not know. Don Baltazar, to whom Navarro recounted thy history, told me that the late King ordered thee to be confined, as a punishment for having carried the Prince of Spain to a suspected place in the night; but I knew no more of the matter; and I can't conceive what part Calderona could play in the piece." "The part of a lover who revenges an injury received," (answered I). I then told him the whole adventure, which he thought so diverting, that, grave as he was, he could not help laughing, or rather weeping with mirth. He was infinitely rejoiced with Catalina, sometimes niece, and sometimes grand-daughter, as well as the part which the Duke of Lerma acted in the whole.

When I had finished my narration, the Count dismissed me, saying, that he would not fail to find me some employment next day. I ran immediately to the house of Zuniga, to thank Don Baltazar for his good offices, and to tell my friend Joseph how well I was with the prime minister.

## CHAPTER V.

*The private conversation which Gil Blas had with Navarro, and the first business in which he was employed by the Count d'Olivarez.*

As soon as I saw Joseph, I told him, with some agitation, that I had a great many things to communicate; upon which he carried me to a private place; where, after having informed him of what had happened, I asked his opinion of the matter. "My opinion (answered he) is, that you are in the way of making a vast fortune: every thing smiles upon you; you are agreeable to the prime minister; and another thing which may turn out to your advantage is, that I can do you the same service which you received from my uncle Melchior de la Ronda, when you first entered the family of the Arch-

\* Rodrigo de Calderona, after having been page to the Vice-Chancellor of Arragon, entered into the service of the Duke of Lerma, and by the interest and favor of that minister, which he expressed in a very particular manner, obtained very considerable offices. He was first of all made gentleman of the bed-chamber to the King, then secretary of state: some time after, he received the collar of the order of St. Jago, was made commander of Arcana, and created captain of the German guard. Such extraordinary favor he could not bear with moderation, but becoming extremely insolent and licentious, despised the most powerful grandees of Spain, to whose hatred he fell a sacrifice, after the disgrace of Cardinal Duke of Lerma. He was arrested in the year 1619, and tried on an impeachment containing 250 articles; among which were sorcery and poisoning the Queen: though these two were not proved, yet he was condemned to lose his head; and being allowed to dispose of, by will, no more than two thousand ducats of all his immense wealth, was ordered to prepare for death. He was afterwards deprived of the ensigns of knighthood, and conducted to the place of execution, dressed in a casock mourning cloak, with a caul of frize, and a cross upon his breast. His body, with two torches on each side of it, was guarded on the scaffold by a party of the patrolle till the evening, when a great number of priests being assembled to honor his remains, they were dismissed and forbid to accompany the corpse, which was carried without any pomp to the church of the Carmelites, according to his own desire. His head was severed by a stroke upon the throat, because in Spain none but traitors receive it on the neck behind: and he died with such courage and decency, as affected even his enemies with sorrow and remorse.

bishop of Grenada. He spared you the trouble of studying the prelate and his principal officers, by disclosing their different characters to you at once; and I will, after his example, make you acquainted with the Count, the Countess his wife, and Donna Maria de Guzman, their only child.

"The minister has a quick, penetrating genius, capable of forming grand designs. He sets up for a universal man, because he has a small tincture of every science, and believes himself able to decide on every thing. He imagines himself a profound lawyer, a great captain, and a most consummate politician. Add to this, he is so intoxicated with his own opinions, that he always follows them rather than those of others, that he may not seem beholden to the understanding of any man. Between you and me, this defect may have strange consequences, from which heaven preserve the monarchy! He shines in the council by a natural eloquence; and he would write as well as he speaks, if, in order to dignify his style, he did not affect expressions which render it stiff and obscure. He is, besides, very whimsical, capricious, and chimerical. So much for his head. As to his heart, he is generous and friendly. He is said to be vindictive: but what Spaniard is otherwise? He is also accused of ingratitude, in being the occasion of exiling the Duke d'Uzeda and the Friar Lewis Alaga; to whom, people say, he had great obligations: but this is pardonable; the desire of being prime minister prevails over every other sentiment.

"Donna Agnez de Zuniga a Velasco, Countess of Olivarez, (continued Joseph,) is a lady who has no fault that I know, but that of selling her favors at a high price. As for Donna Maria de Guzman, who is, without contradiction, this day the richest match in Spain, she is an accomplished young lady, and the idol of her father; model your behavior accordingly; be assiduous in making your court to these two ladies, and appear still more devoted to the Count d'Olivarez than you was to the Duke of Lerma before your journey to Segovia; in which case you will certainly become a personage of rank and power.

"I likewise advise you (added he) to wait upon my master Don Baltazar from time to time; though you have no need of him for your advancement, don't neglect him; he has a very good opinion of you at present: preserve his friendship and esteem, which may be of service to you upon some occasion or other." "As the uncle and the nephew (said I) are both concerned in the ministry, is there no jealousy between the two colleagues?" "On the contrary, (answered he,) they live together in the greatest harmony. Had it not been for Don Baltazar, the Count d'Olivarez, perhaps, would not have been prime minister: for, in short, after the death of Philip the Third, all the friends and partisans of the house of Sandoval exerted themselves very much; some in favor of the Cardinal, and others in behalf of his son; but my master, who was the most subtle among the courtiers, and the Count as cunning as he, broke all their measures, and took such effectual steps to secure that place, that their antagonists were quite foiled. The Count d'Olivarez, when he became minister, shared the administration with his uncle Don Baltazar, to whom he left the care of foreign affairs, reserving all domestic concerns to himself: so that, by these means, strengthening the ties of friendship which ought naturally to unite persons of the same blood, these two noblemen, independent of one another, live in such good correspondence as to me seems unalterable."

Such was the conversation I had with Joseph; by whose information I hoped to profit: after which I went to thank Signior de Zuniga for his goodness towards me. He told me very politely that he would seize every occasion of befriending me, and that he was very glad to find me satisfied with his nephew, to whom he assured me he would speak again in my favor; resolving, at least, (he said,) to convince me that he had my welfare at heart; and that instead of one patron, I had two. It was thus that Don Baltazar, out of friendship for Navarro, interested himself in my behalf.

That very evening I quitted my hired room, to go and lodge at the prime minister's house, where I supped with Scipio in my own apartment. There we were served by the domestics of the family, who, while we ate our victuals with an affected gravity, laughed, perhaps, within themselves, at the respect which they were commanded to show. When the table was uncovered, and they were retired, my secretary, laying aside his constraint, said a thousand diverting things, which his gay disposition and sanguine hopes inspired. As for me, although overjoyed at the brilliant situation in which I saw myself, I felt myself no longer disposed to be dazzled by it: but going to bed, slept soundly, without giving way to the agreeable ideas with which I might have entertained my fancy; whereas the ambitious Scipio enjoyed little repose, but passed half of the night in hoarding up money for the portion of his daughter Seraphina.

I had scarce got on my clothes next morning, when I was sent for by his Grace; who, when I came before him, said to me, "Well, Santillane, let us see a specimen of what thou canst do: thou sayest the Duke of Lerma employed thee in abridging memoirs: I have got one, which I intend for thy first essay. The subject of it is this: it must be a performance to prepossess the public in favor of my ministry. I have already privately spread a report that I found affairs in very great disorder: the business, therefore, is to expose to the eyes of both court and city the miserable condition to which the monarchy is reduced. We must, on this subject, draw a picture which will strike the people, and hinder them from regretting the loss of my predecessor. After that, you must extol the measures which I have taken to render his majesty's reign glorious, his dominions flourishing, and his subjects perfectly happy."

His Grace, having spoke in this manner, gave me a paper, containing the just causes the nation had to complain of the

preceding administration, summed up in ten articles: the least of which, I remember, was sufficient to alarm all good Spaniards: then shutting me in a closet adjoining to his own, he left me to work at liberty. I began to compose my memorial as well as I could. I first of all described the bad condition of the kingdom, the finances exhausted, the royal revenue engrossed by partisans, and the marine entirely ruined. I then demonstrated the faults committed by those who had governed the state under the last reign, and the terrible consequences which might proceed from these faults. In short, I represented the monarchy in danger, and so sharply censured the former minister, that, according to my memorial, the loss of the Duke of Lerma was a great happiness for Spain. To say the truth, though I harbored no resentment against that nobleman, I was not sorry to do him this good office. Such is the disposition of man!

In fine, after a frightful picture of the misfortunes which threatened Spain, I encouraged the minds of the people by making them conceive fair hopes of the future. I made the Count d'Olivarez speak like a saviour sent from heaven for the salvation of the state; I promised mountains and miracles: in a word, I entered so well into the views of the new minister, that he seemed surprised at my performance: which when he had read to an end, "Santillane, (said he,) dost thou know that thou hast composed a morsel worthy of a secretary of state? I am not surprised that the Duke of Lerma employed thy pen; thy style is concise, and even elegant; but I think it is a little too natural." He then pointed out the places which were not to his taste, altering them with his own hand: and I perceived, by his corrections, that he loved (as Navarro had told me) obscure and far-fetched expressions. Nevertheless, though he was resolved to have nobleness, or rather conceits in his diction, he preserved two thirds of my work: and, to show how well he was satisfied with my capacity, sent to me, by Don Raymond, three hundred pistoles as a desert at dinner.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The use to which Gil Blas puts his three hundred pistoles; and his charge to Scipio: with the success of the above-mentioned memorial.*

This favour of the minister furnished Scipio with a new opportunity of congratulating my return to court. "You see (said he) that fortune has great designs in your favor. Are you now sorry for having quitted your solitude? Long life to the Count d'Olivarez! he is quite another sort of a patron than his predecessor. The Duke of Lerma, though you was so much attached to him, let you languish several months without giving you one pistole; whereas the Count has already bestowed upon you a gratification, which you could not have expected till after long service.

"I wish (added he) that the Lords of Leyva were witnesses of the happiness which you enjoy, or at least made acquainted with it." "It is time indeed for them to know it, (answered I,) and I was just going to talk to thee about the matter. I don't doubt that they are extremely impatient to hear from me; but I waited until I should see myself settled in some shape or other, and be able to inform them positively whether or not I should stay at court. Now that I am fixed, thou mayest set out for Valencia when thou wilt, to inform those noblemen of my present situation, which I look upon as their own work, since it is certain, that had it not been for them, I should never have determined upon my journey to Madrid." "My dear master, (cried the son of Coscoina,) how happy will they be, when I recount to them what has happened to you! would I were already at the gates of Valencia! but I shall be there very soon: Don Alphonsus's two horses are ready: I will set out immediately with one of his Grace's lacques; for, besides that I shall be glad of a companion on the road, you know people will be dazzled by the livery of the prime minister.

I could not help laughing at the ridiculous vanity of my secretary; though vainest still, perhaps, than he, I let him do as he desired. "Go, (said I,) and return as soon as possible; for I have another commission to give thee: thou must go to the Asturias with money for my mother: I have, through negligence, let the time pass on which I promised to remit a hundred pistoles to her, and which thou undertook to deliver with thy own hand. These sort of promises from a son ought to be so sacred, that I upbraid myself with my want of punctuality." "Sir, (answered Scipio,) in six weeks I will bring you an account of both these commissions: I will converse with the Lords of Leyva, make a tour to your country-house, and revisit the city of Oviedo, which I never remember without wishing three fourths and a half of its inhabitants at the devil." Upon this I counted out to the son of Coscoina one hundred pistoles for my mother's pension, with one hundred more for himself, that he might agreeably perform the long journey which he had undertaken.

A few days after his departure, the Count sent our memorial to the press; and it was no sooner published than it became the subject of all conversation in Madrid. The people, always friends to novelty, were charmed with the performance; the low ebb of the finances, which was painted in lively colors, incensed them against the Duke of Lerma; and if the strokes of the quill which that minister received were not applauded by every body, at least they met with abundance of approbation.

As for the magnificent promises made by the Count d'Olivarez, and among others, that of defraying the national expense by a prudent economy, without incommencing the subjects, they dazzled the citizens in general, and confirmed them in the grand opinion which they had already entertained of his capacity; so that the whole city echoed with his praise.

That minister, overjoyed to see the accomplishment of his aim, which in that book had been to acquire the public affec-

tion, was resolved to deserve it effectually, by a commendable action, which should be serviceable to the King. For this purpose he had recourse to the invention of the Emperor Galba, that is, to make those who had enriched themselves, the Lord knows how, in the administration of the finances, regorge their wealth. When he had drawn from these leeches the blood which they had sucked, and filled the coffers of the King, he undertook to preserve it, by suppressing all pensions, not even excepting his own, as well as the gratifications that were given out of the King's exchequer. To succeed in this design, which he could not execute without changing the face of government, he employed me in composing a new memorial, the substance and form of which he dictated. He then enjoined me to rise as much as I could above the ordinary simplicity of my style, and give more dignity to my expressions. "Enough, my lord, (said I); your excellency shall have the splendid and sublime which you desire." I shut myself up in the same closet where I had composed the first, and there went to work, after having invoked the eloquent genius of the Archbishop of Granada.

I began by representing, that we could not be too careful in preserving the money which was in the treasury, and which ought to be employed only in the emergencies of the state, as being a sacred fund, reserved on purpose to keep the enemies of Spain in awe. Then I demonstrated to the King, (for the memorial was addressed to him,) that in taking away all the pensions and gratifications with which the revenue was saddled, he should not, for all that, deprive himself of the pleasure of rewarding those subjects who should deserve his favor; since, without touching his treasure, he was in a condition to bestow upon them great recompenses: that for some he had vice-royalties, governments, orders of knighthood, and military employments; for others, commanderies, and pensions upon them, titles, magistracies; and, in fine, all sorts of benefices for those who are consecrated to the church.

This memorial, which was much longer than the first, took me up near three days; and luckily I composed it to the taste of my master; who, finding it written with emphasis, and stuffed with metaphors, loaded me with applause. "I am very well satisfied with this, (said he, pointing to the most tumid places); these are well-stamped expressions. Courage, friend; I foresee that thou wilt be of great service to me: nevertheless, in spite of the applause of which he was so prodigal, he did not fail to re-touch the memorial. He inserted a good deal of his own, and composed a piece of eloquence which charmed the King and the whole court. The city joined its approbation, conceived a happy omen of the future, and flattered itself that the monarchy would resume its ancient lustre under the ministry of such a great man.

His excellency, seeing that this piece did him a great deal of honor, was willing that I should reap some fruit from it, in consideration of my share in the composition: he accordingly bestowed upon me a pension of five hundred crowns upon the commandery of Castile; which was the more agreeable to me, as it was not wickedly, though easily got.

#### CHAPTER VII.

*By what accident, in what place and condition, Gil Blas found his friend Fabricio; and the conversation that happened between them.*

Nothing gave more pleasure to the Count, than to know the opinion which the people of Madrid had of his conduct in the ministry. He asked me every day what people said of him; and even maintained spies, who brought him an exact account of what passed in the city. They reported to him every word which they heard; and as he ordered them to be sincere, his self-love suffered sometimes; for the people have an intemperance of tongue which has no respect of persons.

When I perceived that he was pleased with these reports, I employed myself every afternoon in going to public places, and joining conversation with good company. When they spoke of the government, I listened with attention; and if they said anything that deserved to be re-told to his excellency, I did not fail to inform him of it; but it must be observed, that I never reported any thing which was spoken to his prejudice.

One day, as I returned from one of these places, passing by the door of a hospital, I felt an inclination to enter. I walked through two or three wards full of sick people a-bed, and surveyed every thing around me. Among these unfortunate people, whom I could not behold without compassion, I was struck with the appearance of one, who, I believed, was my old friend and comrade Fabricio. That I might have a more distinct view of him, I approached his bed; and having no longer any reason to doubt that it was the poet Nunnez, I stopped a few minutes to consider him, without speaking; while he, recollecting me also, eyed me in the same manner. At length, breaking silence, "Sure (said I) my eyes deceive me! is this actually Fabricio whom I meet in this place?" "The very same, (answered he coldly); and thou hast no cause to be surprised at it. Since I left thee, I have ever exercised the business of an author: I have composed romances, comedies, all kinds of works of genius. I have run my race, and am now at the hospital."

I could not help laughing at these words, and still more at the serious air with which they were pronounced. "How! (cried I) has thy Muse brought thee to this place? hath she played thee this villainous trick?" "Thou seest it is so, (he replied); this house is the retreat of many a wit. Thou hast done well, my child, to take another road; but methinks thou art no longer at court, and the face of thy affairs is changed: nay, I remember to have heard that thou wast imprisoned by order of the King." "True, (said I), the charming situation in which I was, when we parted, in a little time after was followed by a reverse of fortune, which robbed me of

my wealth and liberty: nevertheless, my friend, thou seest me again in a more flourishing state than ever." "That is impossible! (cried Nunnez): thy apparel is frugal and plain; and thou hast not that vain and insolent air which prosperity usually gives." "Misfortune (answered I) hath purified my virtue; and I have learned in the school of adversity to enjoy riches with moderation."

"Tell me, then, (cried Fabricio, starting up in a transport,) what may be thy employment? what business dost thou follow? art thou not steward to some ruined grandee or opulent widow?" "I have a better post, (I replied); but thou must dispense with my telling thee more at present: I will satisfy thy curiosity another time: I will now only let thee know that I am in a condition to assist thee, or rather to make thee easy for life, provided thou wilt promise to write no more works of genius, either in verse or prose. Dost thou feel thyself capable of making such a sacrifice to me?" "I have already made it to heaven, (said he), during a severe distemper, of which I am just cured. A Dominican father has made me abjure poetry, as an amusement which, if not criminal, at least diverts the mind from the pursuit of wisdom and virtue."

"I congratulate thee, my dear Nunnez, (answered I); but beware of a relapse." "That I am in no fear of, (he resumed); I am firmly resolved to abandon the Muses: and when thou comest into the ward, was just composing an eternal adieu to them in verse." "Mr. Fabricio, (said I, shaking my head,) I don't know if the Dominican and I dare trust to your abjuration, you seem so furiously enchanted by these learned damsels." "No, no, (answered he), I have broke off all connection with them; nay more, I have conceived an aversion for the public, which does not deserve that authors should consecrate their works to it: I should be sorry if I could produce any thing that would please it. Don't imagine (continued he) that this language is dictated by passion: I speak in cold blood; I equally despise the applause and huzzes of the public, which one does not know how to manage. It is so capricious, that it does not think two days one way. What fools are those dramatic writers who are vain of the success of their performances! Whatever noise they make by their novelty, if they are brought upon the stage twenty years after, they are for the most part very ill received. The present generation taxes the past with want of taste, and its determinations are contradicted by those of the next; from whence I conclude, that those authors who are now applauded will be hissed by posterity. It is the same thing with regard to romances and other amusing books, which, though at first they meet with general approbation, insensibly sink into contempt. That honor, therefore, which we reap from the good success of our works, is nothing but a mere chimera, an illusion of the brain, a fire of straw which evaporates in smoke."

Though I was well convinced that the Asturian poet spoke this from passion only, I did not seem to perceive it, and said to him, "I am overjoyed to find thee disgusted with the belles lettres, and radically cured of the rage of writing. Be assured that I will immediately procure for thee an employment in which thou mayest enrich thyself, without being at a great expense of genius." "So much the better! (cried he.) Genius stinks in my nostrils, and I now look upon it as the most fatal present that heaven can bestow upon man." "I wish, my dear Fabricio, (I replied,) that thou mayest still preserve those sentiments. If you persist in your resolution to quit poetry, I repeat it, I will soon procure for thee an honorable and lucrative post; but until I can do thee this service, (added I, giving him a purse of sixty pistoles,) pray accept of this small token of my friendship."

"O generous friend! (cried the son of Barber Nunnez, transported with gratitude and joy,) what thanks do I owe to heaven for bringing thee into this hospital, which I will leave this very day by thy assistance;" and he actually ordered himself to be transported into a hired lodging. But before we parted, I told him where I lived, and invited him to come and see me as soon as he should be perfectly recovered. He seemed extremely surprised when I told him that I lodged in the house of the Count d'Olivarez. "Thrice happy Gil Blas, (said he,) whose fate it is to be a minister's favorite! I rejoice at thy good fortune, since thou usest it so well."

#### CHAPTER VIII.

*Gil Blas becomes more and more beloved by his master. Scipio returns to Madrid, and gives an account of his journey to Santillane.*

THE Count d'Olivarez, whom henceforth I shall call the Count Duke, because the King was pleased about this time to honor him with that title, had a foible which I discovered, very much to my own advantage; and this was a desire of being beloved. As soon as he perceived that any one attached himself to him through inclination, he immediately conceived a friendship for that adherent.

I took care not to neglect this observation. I was not contented with barely doing what he commanded: I executed his orders with such demonstrations of zeal, as quite won his heart. I studied his taste in all things, that I might conform myself to it; and anticipated his desires as much as I could.

By this conduct, which seldom fails of success, I insensibly became the favorite of my master, who, on his part, as I myself had the same foible, gained my whole soul, by the marks of affection which he bestowed on me; and I insinuated myself so far into his favor, that I at length shared his confidence with Signior Carnero, his chief secretary.

Carnero had practised the same method of being agreeable to his excellency; and succeeded so well, that he was intrusted with the mysteries of the cabinet. That secretary and I were the two confidants of the prime minister, and the depositaries of his secrets; with this difference, that he spoke to Carnero of nothing but state affairs, and conversed with

me on his own private concerns only; by those means making as it were two separate departments, with which we were both equally satisfied, we lived together without jealousy, as without friendship. I had cause to be pleased with my situation, which giving me continual opportunities of being with the Count Duke, I was always at hand to observe the very bottom of his soul, which he, though naturally dissembling, ceased to conceal from me when he no longer doubted the sincerity of my attachment.

"Santillane, (said he to me one day,) thou hast seen the Duke of Lerma enjoy an authority which looked more like the power of an absolute monarch than that of a favorite minister: nevertheless, I am still more lucky than he was, even at the highest point of his fortune. He had two formidable enemies in the Duke d'Uzeda, his own son, and in the confessor of Philip the Third. Whereas I see not one person near the King, who has credit enough to hurt me, nor even one whom I suspect to be my foe."

"It is true, indeed, (continued he,) that when I came to the ministry I suffered none to be near the prince but those who were connected with me either by blood or friendship. I have by vice-royalties or embassies got rid of all those noblemen who, by their personal merit, might have acquired some portion of my sovereign's favor, which I was resolved entirely to possess; so that I may now safely say, no great man takes umbrage at my credit. Thou seest, Gil Blas, (added he,) that I disclose my heart to thee. As I have reason to think thee entirely devoted to me, I have chosen thee for my confidant. Thou dost not want understanding; art (I believe) modest, prudent, and discreet; in a word, thou seemest proper for executing twenty sorts of commissions, which require a young man of extensive understanding, who is at the same time in my interest."

I was not proof against the flattering images which these words raised in my imagination. Some vapors of avarice and ambition mounted into my brain, and awaked in me those sentiments over which I thought I had gained a complete triumph. I protested to the minister, that I would answer his intentions with all my power; and I kept myself ready to execute, without scruple, all the commissions with which he should think proper to intrust me.

While I was thus disposed to raise new altars to Fortune, Scipio, returning from his journey, said, "I have not a tedious narration to make. The Lords of Leyva were charmed when I told them the reception you met with from the King when he knew you, and with the behavior of the Count d'Olivarez."

Here I interrupted Scipio, saying, "You would have given them still more pleasure, my friend, could you have told them on what footing I am now with his Grace. The rapidity of the progress which I have made in his excellency's heart since thy departure is altogether prodigious." "God be praised! my dear master, (answered he,) I foresee that a splendid destiny awaits us." "Let us ware this subject, (said I,) and talk of Oviedo. Thou hast been at the Asturias: in what condition didst thou leave my mother?" "Ah! Sir, (he replied, assuming all of a sudden a melancholy look,) I have nothing but afflicting news for you from that quarter." "O heaven! (cried I,) my mother is certainly dead." "Six months ago, (said my secretary,) the good lady paid the tribute of nature, as well as your uncle Signior Gil Perez."

I was deeply affected with my mother's death, although my infancy I had never received from her those caresses which are necessary to make children grateful in the sequel. I likewise paid those tears which I owed to the good cause, for the care he had taken of my education. My grief, indeed, did not last long, but soon mellowed into a tender remembrance which I have always preserved of my parents.

#### CHAPTER IX.

*How, and to whom the Count Duke married his only daughter, with the bitter fruits that marriage produced.*

SOON after the return of Coscolina's son, the Count Duke fell into a profound reverie, in which he remained for the space of eight whole days. I imagined that he was meditating some great stroke of politics; but the subject of his musing regarded his own family only. "Gil Blas, (said he to me one afternoon,) thou must have perceived that I am a good deal perplexed in mind. Yes, my child, I am wholly engrossed by an affair upon which the repose of my life depends; and I will impart the secret to thee."

"Donna Maria, my daughter, (continued he,) is now marriageable, and her heart is disputed by a great number of noblemen. The Count de Niebles, eldest son of the Duke de Medina Sidonia, chief of the family of Guzman, and Don Lewis de Haro, eldest son of the Marquis de Carpio and my own sister, are the two candidates who seem best entitled to the preference; especially the last, who possesses merit so much superior to that of his rivals, that all the court persuade themselves I shall make choice of him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, without entering into the reasons which I have to exclude him as well as the Count de Niebles, I will tell thee that I have cast my eyes on Don Ramon Nunnez de Guzman, Marquis of Toral, and chief of the family of Guzman d'Abrosado; to this young nobleman, and the children which he shall have by my daughter, I intend to leave my whole estate annexed to the title of Count d'Olivarez, to which I will join the quality of grandee; so that my grandchildren and their descendants, proceeding from the branch d'Abrosado and that of Olivarez, will pass for the eldest of the Guzman family."

"Well, Santillane, (added he,) dost thou not approve of my design?" "Pardon me, Sir, (answered I); the project is worthy of the genius that formed it; I am only afraid that the Duke de Medina Sidonia will murmur at it." "Let him murmur, if he please, (resumed the minister,) I shall give

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myself very little trouble about that. I don't love his branch, which hath usurped the birthright and titles thereto attached over the house of Abrados. I shall mind his complaints less than the chagrin of my sister the Marchioness of Carpio, in seeing her son disappointed in his expectation of my daughter. But, after all, I intend to please myself; and it is already decided that Don Ramires shall prevail over all his rivals."

The Count Duke having taken this resolution, gave a new mark of his singular policy, in putting it in practice. He presented a petition to the King, begging that he and the Queen would be pleased to bestow his daughter in marriage, describing the characters of the noblemen who were in pursuit of her, and leaving the choice entirely to their majesties; but he did not fail, in speaking of the Marquis of Toral, to show that he was the most agreeable of them all. Whereupon the King, who had a blind complaisance for his minister, returned this answer: "I believe Don Ramires Nunnez worthy of your daughter Donna Maria; nevertheless, take your own choice. The match which will suit you best, will be the most agreeable to me."

The minister affected to show this answer; and pretending to look upon it as his prince's order, made haste to marry his daughter to the Marquis of Toral; an event that very much displeased the Marchioness of Carpio, as well as the Guzmans, who had flattered themselves with the hope of espousing Donna Maria; nevertheless, as they could not hinder the marriage, they affected to celebrate it with great demonstrations of joy. One would have thought the whole family was charmed with the occasion; but the malcontents were soon revenged in a manner very melancholy for the Count Duke. Donna Maria, ten months brought forth a daughter, which died in the birth; and in a few days after fell herself a victim to death. What a loss was this for a father, who (to use the expression) had no eyes but for his daughter; and who saw in this event the miscarriage of his design of taking the right of eldership from the branch of Medina Sidonia! He was so much affected, that for some days he shut himself up, and would see nobody but me, who, conforming myself to his immoderate grief, seemed as much afflicted as he. To tell the truth, I made use of this occasion to shed fresh tears to the memory of Antonia. The resemblance which her death had to that of the Marchioness of Toral, burst open again the wound which was but imperfectly cured, and renewed my own affliction so much, that the minister, overwhelmed as he was with his own sorrow, could not help being struck with mine. He was astonished to see me enter so warmly into his chagrin. "Gil Blas," said he one day, perceiving me plunged in the most melancholy sadness, it is a sweet consolation for me to have a sympathising confidant. "Ah! my lord," answered I, giving to him all the honor of my affliction, "I must be very ungrateful and hard-hearted indeed, if I did not sincerely sympathize with your Grace. How can I consider that you mourn the loss of a daughter of accomplished merit, whom you tenderly loved, without mingling my tears with yours? No, my lord, I am so sensible of your goodness, that as long as I live I shall always share in your pain as well as pleasure."

## CHAPTER X.

Gil Blas by accident meets the poet Nunnez, who tells him that he has composed a tragedy, which is immediately to be represented on the Prince's theatre. The bad success of that piece, with the surprising good luck that attended its fall.

The minister began to be consoled, and I of consequence to resume my good humor, when one evening I went out alone to take the air in my coach, and met in my way the Asturian poet, whom I had not seen since he quitted the hospital. He being very well dressed, I took him into the coach, and we drove together to St. Jerome's Meadow.

"Mr. Nunnez," said I to him, "I think myself very lucky in having met you by chance, otherwise I should not have had the pleasure." "No reproaches, Santillane," said he with precipitation. "I sincerely own that I had no intention to visit thee, and thou shalt hear the reason. You promised me a good post, provided I should abjure poetry; and I have found a very substantial one on condition that I make verse. I have accepted this last, as most suitable to my humor. A friend of mine has introduced me into the family of Don Bertrand Gomez de Ribero, treasurer of the King's gallees. This Don Bertrand, who wants to have a wit in his pay, finding my verification very brilliant, has chosen me preferably to five or six authors, who offered themselves candidates for the employment of his private secretary."

"I am very glad to hear it, my dear Fabricio," said I for that Don Bertrand is in all appearance very rich." "Rich!" answered he; they say he has such immense wealth that he cannot count it. Be that as it will, my office is this; as he piques himself upon being gallant, and would pass for a man of genius, he keeps a literary correspondence with several very sprightly ladies, and I lend him my pen to compose billets filled with wit and humor. I write for him, in verse to one, in prose to another, and sometimes in person carry the letters, to show the multiplicity of my talents."

"But thou hast not told me," said I, "what I chiefly desire to know; art thou well paid for thy epistolary epigrams?" "Very largely," he replied; rich people are not always generous, and I know some of them who are mere scrubs; but Don Bertrand pays me very nobly. Over and above two hundred pistoles of fixed wages, I frequently receive from him small gratifications, which put me in a condition to act the gentleman, and pass my time agreeably with some authors,

who are, like me, enemies to care." "But (I resumed) has thy treasurer taste enough to relish the beauties of a work of genius, and to perceive its faults?" "Not at all," answered Nunnez; though he can talk speciously, he is by no means a connoisseur. He gives himself out, however, for another Tarpa;\* decides boldly, and supports his opinion with such loudness and obstinacy, that generally, when he disputes, his antagonist is obliged to yield, in order to avoid the shower of ill language with which he is wont to overwhelm his opponents."

"Thou mayest well believe (pursued he) that I am very cautious of contradicting him, whatever cause he gives me for so doing; for, besides the disagreeable epithets which I should certainly bring upon myself, I might possibly be turned out of doors; I therefore prudently applaud what he praises, and disapprove of every thing which he condemns. By this complaisance, which costs me nothing, because I possess the art of accommodating myself to the characters of those who can befriend me, I have gained the friendship and esteem of my patron. He has engaged me to compose a tragedy on a subject which he suggested. I have accordingly finished it under his eye; and if it succeeds, I shall owe one part of my glory to his good advice."

I asked the title of his tragedy; and he told me it was called *The Count de Saldagne*, informing me, at the same time, that it would be represented in three days on the Prince's theatre. "I wish (answered I) that it may have a great run; and I have such a good opinion of thy genius, as to hope it will." "I hope so too," said he; but there is no dependence upon such hope, so uncertain are authors of the event of a dramatic piece. At length the first day of its representation arrived; and as I could not go to the play, being hindered by a commission I had to perform for his Grace, all that I could do was to send Scipio thither, that I might at least know that my evening the success of a performance in which I interested myself. After having waited with impatience, I saw him return with a look from which I conceived a bad omen. "Well, said I, how hath *The Count de Saldagne* been received by the public?" "Very brutally," answered he; never was piece more barbarously used. I came away incensed at the insolence of the pit." "And I (said I) am incensed at the fury of Nunnez in composing plays. Must he not have lost his judgment entirely, to prefer the ignominious snouts and hisses of an audience to the happy lot which I could have procured for him?" Thus through friendship did I inveigh against the Asturian poet, and afflicted myself at the misfortune of his piece, while he exulted in the event."

Two days after, he actually came to my house in a transport of joy. "Santillane," cried he, "I am come to share with thee the extreme pleasure which I feel. In composing a bad play, my friend, I have made my fortune. Thou knowest the strange reception which *The Count de Saldagne* met with; all the spectators exclaimed against him, as if for a wager, and to that general exclamation I owe my good fortune."

Amazed to hear the poet Nunnez talk in that manner, "How! Fabricio," said I, "it is possible that the fall of thy tragedy can justify this immoderate joy?" "Yes, sure," answered he; "I told thee before that Don Bertrand had inserted some of his own composition in my piece, which of consequence he thought excellent. He was violently piqued to find the spectators of a different opinion, and this morning said to me, 'Nunnez, Victor causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni: if the public is displeased with thy production, in recompense it pleases me, and that is enough.' To console thee for the bad taste of the age, I will give thee two thousand crowns a-year on my estate; let us go instantly to my notary and have the deed drawn; we went thither accordingly; the treasurer has signed the deed, and paid me the first year in advance."

I congratulated Fabricio on the unhappy fate of *The Count de Saldagne*, since it had turned out so much to the author's advantage. "Thou hast reason (continued he) to compliment me on that occasion: how happy am I in having been soundly hissed! If the public had been kind enough to honor me with applause, what service should I have received from it? Nothing of consequence. I should have got but a very moderate sum for my labors, whereas its hisses have all of a sudden made me easy for life."

## CHAPTER XI.

Santillane obtains an employment for Scipio, who departs for New Spain.

My secretary could not without envy look upon the unexpected good fortune of the poet Nunnez, which was the sole subject of his discourse during eight whole days. "I admire (said he) the caprice of Fortune, that sometimes delights in loading a detestable author with wealth, while she leaves men of genius in misery; I wish she would take it in her head to enrich me also in the space of one night." "That may very well happen," said I, "and much sooner than you imagine. Thou art here in her temple, for I think we may call the prime minister's house the temple of Fortune, where favors are often bestowed, which of a sudden enrich those who obtain them." "That is true, Sir," answered he; but they must be waited for with patience." "Once more, Scipio," said I, "make yourself easy; perhaps you are on the point of having some good post." A few days after, an opportunity actually offered of employing him advantageously in the service of the Count Duke, and I did not let it escape.

Discussing one morning with Don Raymond Caporis,

steward of the prime minister, our conversation turned upon his excellency's revenues. "His Grace (said he) enjoys the commanderies of all the military orders, which are worth forty thousand crowns per annum, and he is obliged to wear the cross of Alcantara only. Besides, his three posts of great chamberlain, master of the horse, and grand chancellor of the Indies, bring in two hundred thousand more; and all that is nothing in comparison to the immense sums which he draws from America. I will tell you how: when the King's ships set sail from Seville or Lisbon for that country, he embarks on board of them wine, oil, and corn, which his estate of Olivarez affords, and he pays no duty. He sells these commodities in the Indies for four times the price which they would yield in Spain, then employs the money in purchasing spices, colors, and other things, which are bought for almost nothing in that new world, and afterwards are sold for a high rate in Europe. He has already got many millions by this traffic, without doing the least prejudice to the King. What will not surprise you (continued he), is, that the people employed in transacting this commerce always return enriched, the Count allowing them to take care of their own fortune while they manage his."

Coscolina's son, who listened to our discourse, could not hear Don Raymond talk thus without interrupting him. "Zooks! Signior Caporis, I should be glad to be one of these people, for I have long wished to see Mexico." "Your curiosity will soon be satisfied," said the steward to him, "if Signior de Santillane has no objection to your desire. Though I am very nice in the choice of those whom I send to the Indies on this employment (for I choose them all,) I will, without hesitation, insert you in my register if your master desires it." "You will oblige me in so doing," said I to Don Raymond; pray give me that mark of your friendship. Scipio is a young man whom I love; besides, he has a great deal of understanding, and will behave in an irreproachable manner. In a word, I can answer for him as for myself."

"If that be the case," resumed Caporis, "let him repair immediately to Seville; the ships will sail for the Indies in a month. He shall have a letter from me at his departure, for a man who will give him all necessary instructions to enrich himself, without prejudicing the interests of his excellency, which must ever be looked upon as sacred."

Scipio, charmed with his employment, made haste to set out for Seville, with a thousand crowns which I gave him, to buy wine and oil in Andalusia, and put him in a condition to trade in the Indies on his own bottom. Nevertheless, glad as he was to make a voyage by which he hoped to profit so much, he could not leave me without shedding tears, and I could not behold his departure with indifference.

## CHAPTER XII.

Don Alphonso de Leyva comes to Madrid: the motive of his journey. Gil Blas is afflicted at the cause, but rejoices at the consequence of it.

SCIPIO WAS scarce gone, when a page belonging to the minister brought to me a billet containing these words: "If Signior de Santillane will give himself the trouble to call at St. Gabriel's Head, in Toledo-street, he will there see one of his best friends." "Who can this anonymous friend be?" (said I to myself.) Why does he conceal his name? He wants, I suppose, to give me the pleasure of surprise. I went out immediately to Toledo-street, and going to the appointed place, was not a little astonished to see Don Alphonso de Leyva. "Are you here, my lord?" (cried I.) "Yes, my dear Gil Blas," answered he, hugging me close in his arms; it is Don Alphonso himself whom you see." "What brings you to Madrid?" (said I.) "I will both surprise and afflict you (he replied), in telling the cause of my journey. I am deprived of the government of Valencia, and the prime minister has ordered me to court, to give an account of my conduct." "I remained a whole quarter of an hour mute and thunderstruck, then recovering myself, asked what he was accused of." "I know nothing of the matter (answered he), but impute my disgrace to a visit which I made about three weeks ago to the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, who has been a month confined to his castle of Denia."

"O! truly," said I, interrupting him, "you have reason to attribute your misfortune to that indiscreet visit; you need seek for the cause of it nowhere else: and give me leave to say, you did not consult your usual procedure when you went to visit the disgraced minister." "The error is now committed," (said he,) and I have taken my resolution with a good grace. I will retire with my family to the castle of Leyva, where I will spend the rest of my days in profound peace. All that gives me concern is, my being obliged to appear before a haughty minister, who may possibly treat me uncivilly. A sufficient mortification to a Spaniard! Nevertheless, it must be borne: but before I would make this submission, I was willing to speak with you."

"My lord," said I, "don't present yourself before the minister until I know what you are accused of; perhaps the evil is not without remedy. He that as it will, you must allow me, if you please, to exert myself in your favor as much as gratitude and friendship require." So saying, I left him at the inn, assuring him that he should hear from me soon.

As I had not meddled in state affairs since the two memorials, of which eloquent mention has been made, I went to Carnero, and asked if it was true that the government of Valencia had been taken from Don Alphonso de Leyva; he answered in the affirmative, but said he was ignorant of the cause. Upon this, I formed a resolution, without hesitation, to address myself to his Grace, that I might learn from his own mouth what cause he had to be offended with Don Cesar's son.

I was so much penetrated with this troublesome event, that I had no occasion to affect a melancholy look to appear

\* Mr. Le Sage has here deviated from the true history: for Donna Maria died unmarried, though she was betrothed to Raymond de Guzman, Marquis of Toral, afterwards created Duke of Medina de las Torres.

\* Sp. Meius Tarpa, a famous critic of the Augustan age: his tribunal was in the temple of Apollo, where he sat with four colleagues to judge the merit of all theatrical performances before they were exhibited on the stage.

afflicted in the eyes of the Count Duke. "What is the matter, Santillane?" (said he, as soon as he saw me;) I perceive an impression of sorrow on thy countenance, and even the tears ready to drop from thine eyes: has any body injured thee? Speak, and thou shalt be revenged." "My lord, (answered I, weeping,) I would not conceal my sorrow from you if I could: I am quite in despair, bring told that Don Alphonso de Leyva is no longer governor of Valencia; for I could not have heard a piece of news that would affect me more." "What sayest thou, Gil Blas?" (replied the minister astonished;) what concern canst thou have with that Don Alphonso and his government?" I then gave him a detail of all the obligations I lay under to the Lords of Leyva: and afterwards recounted in what manner I had obtained from the Duke of Lerma the government in question for Don Caesar's son.

When his excellency had heard me to an end, with an attention full of kindness for me, he said, "Dry up thy tears, my friend. I not only was ignorant of what thou hast told me, but also that I looked upon Don Alphonso as a creature of the Cardinal of Lerma: put thyself in my place; would not the visit which he made to his eminence make thee suspect him? I am willing to believe, however, that having received his employment from the Cardinal, he took that step out of pure gratitude. I am sorry for having displaced a man who owed his post to thee; but if I have destroyed thy work, I can repair it. I will even do more for thee than the Duke of Lerma did: thy friend Don Alphonso was no more than governor of the city of Valencia, and I will make him viceroy of the kingdom of Arragon. Thou mayest go and inform him of this piece of news, and desire him to come and take the oaths."

When I heard these words, I passed from the extremity of grief to an excess of joy, which disturbed my intellects so much, that my disorder appeared in the compliment of thanks which I made to his Grace, who was not, however, displeased at my confusion. But when I told him that Don Alphonso was already at Madrid, he said I might introduce him that very day. I ran immediately to the St. Gabriel, where Don Caesar's son was overjoyed to hear of his new employment; he could scarce believe what I said, so improbable did it seem to him, that the minister, whatever friendship he had for me, was capable of bestowing viceregalities on my recommendation. I conducted him to the Count Duke, who received him very politely, and told him, "He had behaved so well in his government of the city of Valencia, that the King, thinking him qualified to fill a higher place, had named him to the viceregency of Arragon. Besides, (added he,) that dignity is not above your birth, and the nobility of Arragon cannot murmur at the choice of the court."

His excellency made no mention of me, and the public never knew the part which I acted in this affair: a circumstance that saved Don Alphonso and the minister a great many satirical remarks, that people might have passed upon a vicerey of my making.

As soon as Don Caesar's son was certain of the place, he dispatched an express to Valencia to inform his father and Seraphina of his good fortune, and they soon came to Madrid: their first care was to find me, and overwhelm me with thanks. What a moving and glorious sight was it for me, to see myself embraced with eagerness by the three persons in the world whom I loved most! As sensible of my zeal and affection as the honor which the post of vicerey did to their family, their expressions of gratitude to me were infinite: they even spoke to me as to one of their own rank; they seemed to have forgot that I was their servant; and thought they could never enough manifest their friendship. To suppress useless circumstances, Don Alphonso having received his letters patent, thanked the King and his minister, and having taken the usual oaths, set out with his family from Madrid, to go and fix his abode at Saragossa,\* where he made his entrance with all possible magnificence; and the Arragonians showed by their acclamations that they were very well pleased with the vicerey whom I had set over them.

### CHAPTER XIII.

*Gil Blas meets Don Gaston de Cogollo, and Don Andrea de Tordesillas, at the palace. The conclusion of the story of Don Gaston and Donna Helena de Galisteo. Santillane does an important piece of service to Tordesillas.*

I SWAM in joy for having so luckily changed a displaced governor into a vicerey: even the Lords of Leyva were less pleased at it than I was. I soon had another opportunity of employing my credit for a friend: which I think I should relate, to persuade the reader that I was no longer the same Gil Blas who sold the favors of the court under the preceding ministry.

Being one day in the King's anti-chamber, discoursing with noblemen, who, knowing my situation with the prime minister, did not disdain my conversation, I perceived in the crowd Don Gaston de Cogollo, that state-prisoner whom I had left in the tower of Segovia, and the keeper Don Andrea de Tordesillas along with him. I immediately quitted my company to go and embrace these two friends, whom, if they were astonished to see me there, was still more so to meet in that place.

After some warm hugs on both sides, Don Gaston said to me, "Signior de Santillane, we have a world of questions to ask mutually, and this is not a convenient place for that purpose: allow me to conduct you to a house where Signior de Tordesillas and I will be glad to have a long conversation with you." I consented to this proposal: we squeezed

\* Saragossa, formerly Casarea Augusta, an ancient city, upon the river Ebro, capital of the kingdom of Arragon. It has an archbishop, sovereign council, and is the seat of an university and inquisition.

through the crowd, and going out of the palace, found Don Gaston's coach waiting for us in the street. We went into it all three, and were driven to the great market-place, where the bull-fights are performed, and there Cogollo lived in a very handsome house. "Signior Gil Blas, (said Don Andrea, when we were set in a hall magnificently furnished,) at your departure from Segovia you seemed to hate the court, and to be resolved to remove from it for ever." "That was actually my design, (answered I,) and so long as the late King lived, I did not change my sentiments; but when I understood that the Prince, his son, was on the throne, I was willing to see if the new monarch would know me again: he did recollect me, and I had the good fortune to be favorably received; he himself recommended me to the prime minister, who has conceived a friendship for me, and with whom I am in still greater favor than ever I was with the Duke of Lerma. This, Signior Don Andrea, is what I had to tell you. Now, pray, let me know if you are still keeper of the tower of Segovia?" "No, indeed, (he replied;) the Count Duke has put another in my place; in all probability believing me wholly devoted to his predecessor." "And as for me, (said Don Gaston,) I was set at liberty for a quite contrary reason. The prime minister no sooner learned that I was imprisoned at Segovia by the Duke of Lerma's order, than he ordered me to be discharged. It now remains, Signior Gil Blas, to inform you of what has happened to me since I have been discharged."

"The first thing I did, (continued he,) after having thanked Don Andrea for his kindness to me during my confinement, was to repair to Madrid, and present myself before the Count Duke d'Olivarez, who said to me, 'Don't be afraid that the misfortune which hath happened to you will in the least prejudice your reputation: you are now fully justified; and I am the more convinced of your innocence, because the Marquis of Villarejo, whose accomplice you were suspected to be, was not guilty; for, though he is a Portuguese, and even related to the Duke of Braganza, he is not so much in his interests as in those of the King my master. Your intimacy with that Marquis is therefore no reproach upon you; and in order to repair the injustice which you suffered in being accused of treason, the King has bestowed upon you a lieutenancy in the Spanish guards.' I accepted the commission, begging that his excellency would allow me, before I should enter upon my duty, to go to Coria and visit my aunt Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla. The minister gave me leave for a month, and I set out, accompanied by one lacquey only. We had already passed Colmenar, and were engaged in a hollow road, between two mountains, when we perceived a cavalier defending himself valiantly against three men, who attacked him all together. I did not hesitate, but rode to his succor, and put myself on his side. I observed, while we fought, that our enemies were masked, and that we had to do with vigorous swordsmen: however, in spite of their strength and skill, we remained conquerors, for I pierced one of the three, who fell from his horse, and the other two immediately betook themselves to flight. The victory, indeed, was not much less fatal to us than to the wretch whom I killed; since, after the action, my companion and I found ourselves dangerously wounded. But you may guess what was my surprise, when in this cavalier I recollected Combados, the husband of Donna Helena! He was no less astonished when he saw that I was his defender. 'Ah, Don Gaston!' (cried he,) was it you then who came to my assistance? when you so generously espoused my cause, you little thought it was that of the man who deprived you of your mistress." "I was really ignorant of it, (answered I;) but had I known you, do you imagine that I should have scrupled to do what I have done? are you so much mistaken in me as to think me so base?" "No, no, (he replied,) I have a better opinion of your virtue; and if I die of the wounds which I have received, I hope yours will not hinder you from profiting by my death." Combados, (said I,) although I have not yet forgotten Donna Helena, know that I don't desire to enjoy her at the expense of your life; I am even glad of having contributed towards saving you from the swords of three assassins, since in that I have performed an action agreeable to your wife." While we conversed in this manner, my lacquey alighted, and approaching the dead cavalier, took off his mask, and discovered features which Combados immediately knew. "It is Caparra!" (cried he,) that perfidious cousin, who, out of spite for having been disappointed of a rich estate which he unjustly disputed with me, has a long time cherished the desire of murdering me, and at length chosen this day to put it in execution; but heaven hath permitted him to fall a victim to his own design!"

"Meanwhile our blood flowed apace, and we grew weaker and weaker: nevertheless, wounded as we were, we had strength enough to go to the town of Villarejo, which was but two gun-shots from the field of battle. We alighted at the first inn we came to, and sending for surgeons, one was brought who had the reputation of being very expert in his profession. He examined our wounds, which he found dangerous, then dressed them; and next day, after having taken off the dressings, declared that the wounds of Don Blas were mortal: he judged more favorably of mine, and his prognostics were fulfilled.

"Combados, hearing his doom, thought of nothing but preparing for death: he likewise dispatched an express to inform his wife of what had happened, and of his present melancholy situation; upon which Donna Helena, setting out immediately, soon arrived at Villarejo, her mind disturbed with a disquiet which had two different causes: the danger in which her husband was, and the dread of feeling, at sight of me, a flame which was but half extinguished, revive, created a terrible agitation in her breast. 'Madam, (said Don Blas, when she came into his presence,) you arrive time enough to receive my last adieu: I am going to die, and regard my death as the punishment of heaven for having by a

deceit deprived you of Don Gaston. Far from murmuring at my fate, I exhort you to restore to him the heart which I unjustly seized.' Donna Helena answered only by her tears; and truly it was the best reply she could make, as she was not as yet so much detached from me as to forget the article which he had practised to make her break her vows."

"As the surgeon had prognosticated, Combados died of his wounds in less than three days, while mine indicated a speedy cure. The young widow, who was wholly engaged by the care of transporting the husband's corpse to Coria, in order to perform all the funeral honors which she owed to his ashes, departed from Villarejo, after having inquired (through mere politeness) about my health. As soon as I could follow her, I set out also for Coria, where my recovery being completed, my aunt Donna Eleonora, and Don George de Galisteo, resolved that Helena and I should be married forthwith, lest fortune should again part us by some unlucky accident. This marriage was celebrated in private, on account of the too recent death of Don Blas; and a few days after I returned to Madrid with Donna Helena. As I had exceeded the time prescribed by the Count Duke for my journey, I was afraid that he had given to another the lieutenancy which he had promised to me: but he had not disposed of it, and was so good as to admit the excuses which I made for my delay."

"I am now (continued Cogollo) lieutenant of the Spanish guard, am pleased with my employment, and have contracted some agreeable friends, with whom I live very happily." "I wish I could say as much (cried Don Andrea); but I am very far from being satisfied with my condition: I have lost my post, which was pretty advantageous; and I have no friends who have credit enough to procure me such another." "Pardon me, Signior Don Andrea, (said I, smiling,) you have in me a friend who is good for something. I have already said that I am still better beloved by the Count Duke than ever I was by the Duke of Lerma, and you have the assurance to tell me, to my face, that you have not a friend who can procure a good post for you. Have I not once before done you such a piece of service? Remember that, by the interest of the Archbishop of Granada, I was the occasion of your being named to exercise an employment at Mexico, where you would have made your fortune if love had not detained you in the city of Alicante; and I am at present more capable of serving you, having the ear of the prime minister." "I trust wholly to you, then, (replied Tordesillas;) but (added he, smiling in his turn) pray don't send me to New Spain: I would not go thither if I was to be made chief judge of Mexico."

We were interrupted in this part of our conversation by Donna Helena, who came into the hall, and whose amiable person equalled the charming idea which I had formed of her beauty. "Madam (said Cogollo to her), this is Signior de Santillane, of whom you have heard me speak, and whose agreeable company hath often suspended my sorrows while I was in prison." "Yes, Madam (said I to Donna Helena), my conversation pleased him, because you was always the subject of it." Don George's daughter made a modest reply to my compliment; after which I took my leave of this couple, protesting that I was ravished to find their long passion was at length crowned by a happy marriage. Then addressing myself to Tordesillas, I desired him to give me his direction, when I received, "Without bidding you adieu, Don Andrea (said I), I hope, in less than eight days, you will see that I have power as well as friendship." My words were soon verified; the very next day the Count Duke furnished me with an occasion to oblige the keeper. "Santillane (said his excellency), the place of governor of the royal prison at Valladolid is vacant: it brings in more than three hundred pistoles per annum, and I am resolved to bestow it upon thee." "I would not have it, my lord (answered I), were it worth ten thousand ducats yearly: I renounce all posts that I cannot enjoy without removing from your Grace." "But (resumed the minister) thou mayest very well enjoy this, without being obliged to leave Madrid, except to go sometimes to Valladolid to visit the prison." "You may say what you please, (I replied;) I will not accept of that employment, but on condition that I shall be allowed to resign in favor of a brave gentleman called Don Andrea de Tordesillas, formerly keeper of the tower of Segovia: I should love to make him that present, as an acknowledgment for the kind treatment I received from him during my confinement."

The minister, laughing at this discourse, said, "I see, Gil Blas, thou hast a mind to make a governor of a royal prison, as thou hast made a vicerey. Well, be it so, my friend: I give to thee this vacant place for Tordesillas. But tell me freely what advantage thou wilt reap from it: for I don't believe thee fool enough to employ thy credit for nothing." "My lord (answered I), ought not a man to pay his debts?" Don Andrea, in the most disinterested manner, did me all the service he could: ought not I to requite his generosity?" "You are become very disinterested, Mr. Santillane, (said his excellency;) I think you were not so much so under the last minister." "I own it, (said I;) my morals were corrupted by bad example: as every thing was then put to sale, I informed myself to the fashion; and as every thing is now given away, I have resumed my integrity."

I procured, then, the government of the royal prison of Valladolid for Don Andrea, whom, in a little time, I sent to that city, as well satisfied with his new settlement, as I was with the opportunity of acquiring myself of the obligation I owed him.

### CHAPTER XIV.

*Santillane visits the post Numex: an account of the persons whom he found, and the discourse which he heard at his lodgings.*

ONE afternoon I was seized with an inclination of visiting

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the Asturian poet, being curious to know how he was lodged. I went accordingly to the house of Signior Don Bertrand Gomez de Ribero, and asking for Nunnez, "He does not live here," said the porter; but lodges there at present, having hired the back-side of that house." So saying, he pointed to a house in the neighborhood, whither I went; and, after having crossed a small court, entered into a naked hall, where I found my friend Fabricio still at table, with five or six of his companions, whom he treated that day.

They had almost dined, and consequently were in a trim for disputing; but as soon as they perceived me, their noisy discourse subsided into profound silence. Nunnez got up with great eagerness to receive me, crying, "Gentlemen, this is Signior de Santillane, who is so good as to honor me with a visit: pray join me in paying your respects to the favorite of the prime minister." At these words, all the guests got up to salute me; and, in favor of the title which I had received, treated me with great civility and respect. Although I was neither hungry nor thirsty, I could not excuse myself from sitting down at table with them; and was even obliged to honor the toast which they had proposed.

As I imagined that my presence was a check upon their conversation, "Gentlemen," said I, "I have interrupted your discourse: pray resume it, or I will be gone." "These gentlemen," said Fabricio, "were talking of the Iphigenia of Euripides. The Bachelor Melchior de Villegas, who is a critic of the first order, was asking of Signior Don Jacinto de Romarata, what was the most interesting circumstance of the tragedy." "Yes," said Don Jacinto, "and I answered that it was the danger of Iphigenia." "And I," said the Bachelor, "replied, and I am ready to demonstrate my assertion, that the danger is not the most interesting part of the subject." "What is then?" cried the old Licentiate Gabriel de Leon. "Tis the wind," said the Bachelor.

The whole company burst into laughing at this repartee, which I could not believe serious. I thought that Melchior pronounced it with a view of enlivening the conversation; but I did not know this virtuoso, who was a man that did not at all understand raillery. "Laugh as much as you please," gentlemen (replied he drily), "I maintain that the wind alone ought to interest, surprise, and move the spectator: figure to yourselves a numerous army assembled to go and besiege Troy; conceive all the impatience of the chiefs and soldiers to execute that enterprise, that they may speedily return into Greece, where they have left what is most dear to them, their wives, children, and household gods; in the mean time, a cursed contrary wind detains them at Aulis, seems to nail them to the port, and if it does not change, they cannot go and besiege the city of Priam: it is the wind, therefore, which constitutes the most interesting point of that tragedy. I share with the Greeks, I espouse their cause; my whole wish is the departure of the fleet; and I see with indifference the danger of Iphigenia, since her death is the only means of obtaining a favorable wind from the gods."

Villegas had no sooner done speaking, than the laugh was renewed at his expense. Nunnez was so mischievous as to support his opinion, that he might afford more game to the railers, who began to pass a great many jokes upon the wind: but the Bachelor beholding them all with a phlegmatic, haughty look, treated them as ignorant and vulgar minds. I expected every moment to see them warm, and go to loggerheads, the usual end of their dissertations; but I was balked in my expectation; they were contented with reviling one another, and withdrew when they had eaten and drank their fill.

When they were gone, I asked Fabricio why he did not stay still with his treasurer; and if he had quarrelled with him. "Quarrelled!" answered he, "God forbid: I am more a favor than ever with Signior Don Bertrand, who has allowed me to lodge by myself. I have therefore hired these lodgings, to receive my friends and make merry with them in full liberty: which is often the case for thou knowest that I am not of a humor to leave much wealth to my heirs; and, what is very happy for me, I am, at present, in a condition of enjoying parties of pleasure every day." "I am overjoyed to hear it, my dear Nunnez," said I; "and I cannot help congratulating thee again upon the success of thy last tragedy: the whole eight hundred dramatic pieces of the great Lope have not brought him one fourth of what thou hast got by thy Count de Saldagne."

## BOOK XIII.

## CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas is sent to Toledo by the minister; the motive and success of his journey.

DURING a whole month almost, his Grace had been saying to me every day, "Santillane, the time draws nigh when I shall set thy address to work;" and still this time did not come. At length, however, it arrived; and his excellency spoke to me in these words: "It is reported that, in the company of players belonging to Toledo, there is a young actress whose talents make a great noise; it is said that she dances and sings divinely, and quite captivates the spectators by her declamation. I am assured also, that she has a considerable share of beauty. Such a genius deserves to appear at court. The King loves plays, music, and dancing; and he must not be deprived of the pleasure of seeing and hearing a person of such extraordinary merit. I have resolved, therefore, to send thee to Toledo, to judge by thyself whether or not she is actually such a wonderful actress. I will be governed by the impression she shall make upon thee, as I depend a great deal on thy discernment." I answered, that I should give his Grace a good account of that affair; and prepared for my departure with one lacquey only, whom I ordered to put off the minister's livery, that things might be done the more mysteriously. And this was very much to his

excellency's taste. I set out then for Toledo, where, when I arrived, I alighted at an inn near the castle. Scarce had I set my foot to the ground, when the landlord, taking me, doubtless, for some country gentleman, said to me, "Signior Cavalier, I suppose you are come to town to see the august ceremony of the Auto da Fe,\* which is to be performed to-morrow." I answered in the affirmative, thinking it more prudent to let him believe that, than to give him an opportunity of questioning me about my coming to Toledo. "You will see (he resumed) one of the finest processions that ever happened: there are (I am told) more than a hundred prisoners among whom they reckon above ten who are to be burnt."

Next morning, indeed, before sunrise, I heard all the bells of the city tolling; and this melancholy sound was to advertise the people that they were going to begin the Auto da Fe. Curious to see this solemnity, I put on my clothes in a hurry, and repaired to the inquisition. All along the streets through which the procession was to pass, scaffolds were erected, upon one of which I hired a place. In a little time I perceived the Dominicans, who walked foremost, preceded by the banners of the inquisition. These good fathers were immediately followed by the wretched victims which were to be sacrificed that day by the holy office. These miserable creatures walked one after another with their heads and feet bare, each having a wax taper in his hand, and a god-father by his side. Some had large scarapulas of yellow stuff, garnished with St. Andrew's crosses painted red, and called *sarbenito*; others wore carochas, which are high paper caps made in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and covered with flames and diabolical figures.

As I looked attentively at these unfortunate people with a compassion which I took care to conceal, that I might not suffer for it, I thought I recollected, among those who had their heads adorned with carochas, the reverend Father Hilary, and his companion Brother Ambrose. They passed so near me that I could not be mistaken. "What do I see?" (said I to myself,) heaven, wearied with the disorderly lives of these wretches, hath delivered them at last to the justice of the inquisition!" So saying, I felt myself seized with horror: I trembled from head to foot, and my spirits were so disordered, that I had almost swooned. The connection which I once had with these rogues, the adventure of Xelva, in short, all the circumstances of my correspondence with them, presented themselves that moment to my fancy; and I thought I could never be thankful enough to God for having preserved me from the scapulary and carochas.

When the ceremony was ended, I returned to the inn, trembling at the dreadful spectacle which I had beheld: but these afflicting images which disturbed my imagination, dispersed insensibly; and now my whole study was to acquire myself handsomely of the commission intrusted to my care. I waited impatiently for play-time, that I might go to the theatre, judging that to be the most proper beginning of my work: and as soon as the hour came, I went thither, and sat down by a knight of Alcantara; with whom entering into conversation, "Signior," said I to him, "am a stranger to you, so bold as to ask you one question?" "Signior Cavalier," answered he, very politely, "I shall think it an honor." "I have heard the actors of Toledo (I resumed) very much extolled; pray, have I been misinformed?" "No," replied the knight, "their company is not bad; nay, there are great players among them. You will see, among others, the fair Lucrétia, an actress of fourteen years of age, who will surprise you very much. I shall have no occasion to point her out to you; when she appears, you will easily distinguish her from the rest." I asked if she was to play that evening; and he told me she would, observing, at the same time, that she had a very shining part to act in the piece which was going to be represented.

The play began; and two actresses, who had neglected nothing which could contribute towards rendering them charming, appeared on the stage: but, in spite of the lustre of their diamonds, I took neither the one nor the other for her whom I expected. At length, Lucrétia walked forward from the bottom of the stage; and her appearance was saluted by a long and general clapping of hands. "Ah! there she is," said I to myself: what a noble air! what grace! what fine eyes! O the divine creature!" I was actually very well pleased, or rather passionately struck with her person. On hearing her recite the first couplet, I found she had nature, fire, and understanding above her age; and I willingly joined my applause to that which she received from the whole audience during the performance. "Well," said the knight to me, "you see how Lucrétia is caressed by the public." "I am not at all surprised at it," answered I. "You would be less so still," said he, "if you had heard her sing. She is a perfect syren. Woo be to those who listen! Her dancing is no less formidable. Her steps, as dangerous as her voice, charm the eye, and force the heart to yield." "If that be the case," cried I, "it must be owned she is a prodigy. What happy mortal has the pleasure of ruining himself for such an admirable creature?"

"She has no declared lover," said he, "and even scandal has not as yet involved her in any private intrigue. Nevertheless, (added he,) this may soon be the case; for Lucrétia is under the conduct of her aunt Estella, who is certainly the most expert of all the actresses." At the name of Estella, I interrupted the knight with precipitation, to ask if that Estella was an actress of the Toledo company. "She is one of the best of them," said he; "she has not acted to-day, and we have suffered by her absence: she usually plays the part of the waiting-woman, which she performs to admiration. Her action is full of spirit; perhaps too full; but it is an agreeable

\* The Act of Faith.

† People named by the Inquisition to accompany the prisoners to the Auto da Fe, and obliged to be answerable for them.

fault, which ought to be forgiven." The knight told me wonders of this Estella; and, by the picture he drew of her person, I never doubted that it was Laura, that same Laura of whom I have spoken so much in my history, and whom I had left at Grenada.

However, to be more certain still, after the play I went behind the scenes; and casting my eyes around, found her in the tying-room, talking to some gentlemen, who, perhaps, regarded her only as the aunt of Lucrétia. I advanced to salute Laura; but whether through whim, or in order to punish me for my precipitate departure from Grenada, she pretended not to know me, and received my civilities so drily that I was a little disconcerted. Instead of upbraiding her in a laughing humor for her cold behavior towards me, I was fool enough to be nettled at it; I even retired hastily, resolving, in my passion, to return next day to Madrid. "To be revenged of you, Laura," said I to myself, "her niece shall not have the honor of appearing before the King: for this purpose I can give to the minister such a description of Lucrétia as I please; I have no more to do but to tell him that she dances with a bad grace, that she has a squeaking voice, and, in short, that her charms consist in her youth only. I am sure his excellency, after that, will have no inclination to bring her to court."

Such was the vengeance I meditated against Laura for her behavior to me; but my resentment did not last long: next day, just as I was about to depart, a page entered my chamber, and said, "Here is a letter for Signior de Santillane." "I am the person, my child," answered I, taking the letter, which contained these words: "Forget the manner in which you were received last night in the tying-room, and be so good as to follow the bearer." I immediately took the page for my conductor, who, when we were near the play-house, introduced me into a very handsome house, where I found Laura at her toilet in a very genteel apartment.

She got up to embrace me, saying, "Signior Gil Blas, I know that you have no cause to be pleased with the reception you met with when you came to salute me in our tying-room; an old friend like you had a right to expect more civil treatment: but I must tell you, for my excuse, that I was then in a very bad humor. When you appeared, I was quite engrossed by some scandalous discourse which one of our gentlemen had uttered against my niece, whose honor is dearer to me than my own. Your sudden retreat (added she) made me immediately recollect myself; and that moment I ordered my page to follow you to your lodging, that I might to-day make amends for my fault." "That is already done, my dear Laura," said I; "let us talk no more of that matter: let us rather inform one another of what has happened to us since the unlucky day in which the dread of just chastisement made me quit Grenada with great precipitation. I left you, you may remember, in pretty great perplexity: pray, how did you extricate yourself? Had you not occasion for all your address to appease your Portuguese lover?" "Not at all," replied Laura; "don't you know, that in such cases the men are so weak that they sometimes even spare the women the trouble to justify themselves? I affirmed (continued she) to the Marquis of Marialva, that thou wast my brother. Pardon me, Mr. Santillane, if I speak to you as familiarly as heretofore: but I can't get rid of my old habits. I tell thee, then, that I brazened it out. 'Don't you see' (said I to the Portuguese nobleman), 'that all this is the work of jealousy and rage? Narcissa, my comrade and rival, incensed to see me in quiet possession of a heart of which she is balked, has played me this trick: she has bribed the under candle-snuffer, who, as the minister of her resentment, has the impudence to say that he has seen me Arsenia's chamber-maid. Nothing can be more false: the widow of Don Antonio Celso always entertained too noble sentiments, to humble herself so low as to serve an actress. Besides, what proves the falsity of the accusation and the conspiracy of my accusers, is the precipitate retreat of my brother: if he was present, he might confound their slander; but Narcissa has, doubtless, employed some new artifice to make him disappear.' Though these reasons (pursued Laura) made but an indifferent apology, the Marquis was so good as to be satisfied with it: and that good-natured nobleman continued to love me, until the day of his departure from Grenada on his return to Portugal. Indeed, he did not stay long after thee: and the wife of Zapata had the pleasure of seeing me lose the lover of whom I had deprived her. After that, I lived some years at Grenada: then a division happening in our company, which is often the case, all the players separated: some went to Seville, others to Cordova; and I came to Toledo, where I have been ten years, with my niece Lucrétia, whom thou must have seen act last night, since thou wast at the play."

I could not help laughing in this place; and Laura asking the cause, "Can't you guess?" said I; "you have neither brother nor sister, and, of consequence, cannot be Lucrétia's aunt. Besides, when I calculate the time which hath elapsed since our last separation, and compare it with the age of your niece, I cannot help thinking that you are more nearly related."

"I understand you, Mr. Gil Blas," replied Don Antonio's widow, reddening; "what a chronologist you are! it is impossible to make you believe it. Well then, my friend, Lucrétia is my daughter by the Marquis of Marialva; she is the fruit of our correspondence; I can no longer conceal it from thee." "What a great effort you make, my princess," said I, "in revealing that secret, after having imparted to me your adventures with the steward of the hospital of Zamora. I must tell you, moreover, Lucrétia is a maid of such singular merit, that the public can never be thankful enough to you for having made such a present to it. It were to be wished that all your comrades had done the same." "If some mischievous reader, in this place, recollecting the private

conversations which I had with Laura at Grenada while I was secretary to the Marquis of Marialva, suspects that I might have disputed with that nobleman the honor of being Lucretia's father, it is a suspicion, the justice of which I must avow to my shame. I recounted my principal adventures to Laura in my turn, and made her acquainted with my present situation. She listened to my narration so attentively, as to show that it was far from being indifferent to her; and when I had finished it, "Friend Santillane, (said she,) I find you act a very considerable part on the theatre of the world; and you cannot imagine how much I am overjoyed at your good fortune. When I shall bring Lucretia to Madrid, with an intention to introduce her into the Prince's company, I flatter myself that she will find a powerful protector in Signor de Santillane." "Never doubt that, (answered I,) you may depend upon me: I will procure your daughter's admittance into the Prince's company whenever you please: this is what I can promise, without presuming too much upon my power." "I would take you at your word, (replied Laura,) and set out for Madrid to-morrow, were I not restricted to this place by engagements with our company." "An order from court can break these ties, (said I,) and you shall receive one in less than eight days. I shall be pleased in taking Lucretia from the Toledoans: such a handsome actress is destined for courtiers, and properly belongs to us."

Lucretia entered the room just as I had pronounced these words: and seemed so pretty and engaging, that I took her for the goddess Hebe. She had just risen; and her natural beauty, shining without the help of art, presented a ravishing object to my view. "Come, niece, (said her mother to her,) come and thank this gentleman for his friendship: he is an old acquaintance of mine, who has great interest at court, and intends to introduce us both into the Prince's company." These words seemed to give pleasure to the dear girl, who made me a low courtesy; and said, with an enchanting smile, "I most humbly thank you for your obliging intention; but, in taking me from the people by whom I am beloved, are you sure that I shall please the audience at Madrid? I shall, perhaps, lose by the change. I remember to have heard my aunt say, that she has seen actors caressed in one place, and hissed in another; and this gives me some concern: beware of exposing me to the contempt, and yourself to the reproaches, of the court." "Fair Lucretia, (answered I,) neither you nor I have reason to be apprehensive of that: I rather fear, that by inflaming all that behold you, you will create some misunderstanding among our grandees." "The fear of my niece (said Laura) is better founded than yours; but I hope they are both vain: if Lucretia cannot make a noise by her charms, in recompense she is no contemptible actress."

Our conversation lasted some time longer: and I had reason to conclude, from every thing which Lucretia said, that she was a maid of a superior genius. I then took my leave of the two ladies, assuring them that they should soon have an order from court to repair to Madrid.

#### CHAPTER II.

*Santillane gives an account of his commission to the minister, who employs him to bring Lucretia to Madrid. The arrival of that actress, and her appearance at court.*

At my return to Madrid, I found the Count Duke very impatient to know the success of my journey. "Gil Blas, (said he,) hast thou seen this same actress? Is she worth bringing to court?" "My lord, (I replied,) Fame, which usually praises beauties more than they deserve, has not said enough in commendation of young Lucretia: she is an admirable creature, both as to her person and talents." "Is it possible! (cried the minister, with an interior satisfaction, which I read in his eyes, and which made me believe that he had sent me to Toledo on his own account,) is it possible that she can be so amiable?" "When you have seen her, (answered I,) you will own that no eulogium can do justice to her charms." "Santillane, (said his excellency,) give me a faithful relation of thy journey; I shall be very glad to hear it." To satisfy my master, I then recounted all, even the history of Laura inclusively. I told him that this actress had Lucretia by the Marquis of Marialva, a Portuguese nobleman, who, stopping at Grenada on his travels, fell in love with her. In short, when I had recounted to his Grace every thing that had happened between the two actresses and me, he said, "I am overjoyed to hear that Lucretia is the daughter of a man of quality; that circumstance interests me still more in her behalf; she must be brought to town. But (added he) continue as thou hast begun: let not me appear in it: every thing must pass in the name of Gil Blas de Santillane."

I went and told Carnero, that his excellency desired him to expedite an order, by which the King received into his company Estrella and Lucretia, two actresses of Toledo. "Aha! Signor de Santillane! (said Carnero, with a satirical smile;) yes, you shall be served immediately, since, in all appearance, you interest yourself for these two ladies." At the same time he wrote an order with his own hand, and delivered it to me to be expedited; so that I sent it instantly to Estrella by the same lacquey who had attended me to Toledo. Eight days after, the mother and daughter arriving at Madrid, took lodgings hard by the Prince's company, and their first care was to give me notice of it by a billet. I visited them immediately, where, after a thousand offers of service on my side, and as many acknowledgments on theirs, I left them to prepare for their first public appearance, which I wished might be brilliant and successful.

They advertised themselves as two new actresses, whom the Prince's company had received by an order from court; and they began with a comedy which they had often acted at Toledo with applause. In what part of the world are new

sights disregarded? The play-house was that day filled with an extraordinary concourse of spectators; and you may well imagine that I did not fail to be there. I suffered a little before the piece began; and, prepossessed as I was in favor of the talents both of mother and daughter, I trembled for them, so much was I interested in their success. But scarce had they opened their mouths, when my fear was banished by the applause which they received. Estrella was looked upon as a consummate comic actress, and Lucretia as a prodigy in tender parts. This last captivated all hearts. Some admired the beauty of her eyes, others were touched by the sweetness of her voice; and every body, struck with the graces and brilliancy of her youth, went away enchanted by her appearance.

The Count Duke being more interested than I imagined in the first essay of this actress, was at the play that evening; and I saw him go out about the end of the performance, seemingly very well satisfied with our two new players. Curious to know if he was really affected with their success, I followed him home, and going into his closet just after him; "Well, my lord, (said I,) is your excellency satisfied with young Marialva?" "My excellency (answered he smiling) would be very nice indeed, if I refused to join my vote to that of the public. Yes, child, I am charmed with thy Lucretia, and I don't doubt that the King will be pleased when he sees her."

#### CHAPTER III.

*Lucretia makes a great noise at court, and acts before the King, who falls in love with her. The consequences of his passion.*

THE appearance of two new actresses soon made a noise at court; the very next day it was spoke of at the King's levee. Some noblemen extolled young Lucretia in particular, and drew such a beautiful picture of her, that the monarch was struck with it; but dissembling the impression which their discourses made upon his heart, he seemed to take no notice of what they said. Nevertheless, as soon as he found himself alone with the Count Duke, he asked who this actress was whom they praised so much. The minister answered that she was a young player of Toledo, who had made her first appearance the preceding night with great success. She is called Lucretia, (added he,) a name very suitable to people of her profession. She is an acquaintance of Santillane's, who spoke so much in her favor, that I thought proper to receive her into your majesty's company."

The King smiled when he heard my name mentioned, because he remembered perhaps, at that moment, that it was I who had made him acquainted with Catalina, and foresaw that I should do him the same service on this occasion. "Count, (said he to the minister,) I will go to-morrow and see this Lucretia act. Take care to advertise her of my intention."

The Count Duke, having repeated this conversation to me, and informed me of the King's design, sent me to impart it to our two actresses. "I come (said I to Laura, who was the first I met) to tell you a piece of great news; you will to-morrow have among your spectators the sovereign of this monarchy; this is what I am ordered by the minister to acquaint you with. I don't doubt that your daughter and you will do your utmost to deserve the honor which the King intends you; but I advise you to choose a piece in which there is both dancing and music, that he may admire all the talents of Lucretia together." "We will take your advice, (replied Laura,) and do all in our power to amuse the Prince." "He cannot fail of being pleased, (said I, seeing Lucretia come in, in a dishabille, which gave her more charms than the most superb theatrical dress.) He will be so much the more satisfied with your lovely niece, as he loves singing and dancing above all other entertainments; who knows but he may be tempted to throw the handkerchief at her?" "I don't at all wish (replied Laura) that he may have any such temptation, notwithstanding his being a powerful monarch, he might find obstacles to the accomplishment of his desires. Lucretia is virtuous, though bred behind the scenes; and whatever pleasure she may feel in seeing herself applauded on the stage, she would rather pass for a modest girl than for a good actress."

"Why should my aunt (said young Marialva, joining in the conversation) form such chimeras to fight with? I shall never be obliged to repulse the sighs of the King: the delicacy of his taste will save him from the reproaches he would deserve if he could humble his attention to me." "But charming Lucretia, (said I,) should it happen that the Prince would attach himself to you, and choose you for his mistress, would you be so cruel as to let him languish in your chains like an ordinary lover?" "Why not? (answered she.) Yes, doubtless; and though virtue were out of the question, my vanity would exult much more in resisting than in yielding to his passion." I was not a little astonished to hear a pupil of Laura talk in this manner; and left the ladies, praising the last for having bestowed such good education on the other.

Next day, the King, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the play. They acted a performance mixed with songs and dances, in which our young actress shone very much. From the beginning to the end I kept my eyes fixed on the monarch, and in his looks endeavored to read his thoughts; but he baffled my penetration by an air of gravity which all along he affected to preserve. I did not learn till next day what I was so curious to know. "Santillane, (said the minister to me,) I have just left the King, who has spoken to me of Lucretia with so much vivacity, that I am convinced he is captivated by that young player, and as I told him that thou wast the occasion of bringing her from Toledo, he said he should be glad to talk with thee in private on that subject. Go instantly and present thyself to his chamber-door, where there is an order already given to admit thee. Run,

therefore, and bring me back as soon as possible an account of the conversation."

I flew instantly to the palace, where I found the King alone, walking very fast, in expectation of my coming, and seemingly very much perplexed. He put several questions to me about Lucretia, whose history he obliged me to recount: he then asked if the little gentleman had never been engaged in any intrigue. I boldly assured him that she had not (though these sorts of assurances are a little rash), and the Prince seemed very glad to hear it. "If that be the case, (said he,) I choose thee for my agent with Lucretia; and desire that by thy means she may this evening learn her victory. Go, signify her conquest from me, (added he, putting into my hand a diamond necklace worth forty thousand crowns,) and tell her that I desire she will accept of that present, until I give her more solid marks of my affection."

Before I performed this commission, I went back to the Count Duke, and made a faithful report of what the King had said: with this I imagined the minister would be more afflicted than rejoiced, for I believed, (as I have already observed,) that he himself had amorous views upon Lucretia, and would be chagrined to hear that his master was become his rival; but I was mistaken. Far from seeming mortified at the news, it gave him so much joy, that being unable to contain it, some words escaped him which did not fall to the ground. "Aha! Philip, (cried he,) egad, I have you fast. For once you will be sick of business." This apostrophe disclosed the whole contrivance of the Count Duke. I now perceived that the minister, being afraid of the King's applying himself to serious affairs, endeavored to amuse him with pleasures more suitable to his humor. "Santillane, (said he afterwards,) lose no time; make haste, my friend, to go and execute the important order which thou hast received, and which a great many noblemen at court would glory in performing. Consider (said he) that thou hast here no Count de Lemos to deprive thee of one half of the honor acquired in this service. Thou wilt have it entirely to thyself, and moreover enjoy all the fruits of it."

Thus did his excellency gild the pill, which I swallowed down gently, though not without tasting the bitterness of it: for, since my imprisonment, I had been used to look upon things in a moral point of view, and did not think the post of Mercury in chief quite so honorable as it was called. However, though I was not vicious enough to perform it without remorse, I had not virtue sufficient to make me refuse the employment. I therefore obeyed the King the more willingly, as I saw at the same time that my compliance would be agreeable to the minister, whom it was my sole study to please. I thought proper to address myself at first to Laura, to whom in a private conversation I disclosed my mission in a discreet manner; and, towards the end of the discourse, presented the jewels: at sight of which, the lady, being unable to conceal her joy, gave a loose to it. "Signor Gil Blas, (cried she,) I ought not to constrain myself before my oldest and best friend. I should be to blame in affecting a false severity of morals, and making grimaces with you. Yes, you need not doubt it, (continued she,) I am overjoyed that my daughter has made such a precious conquest, all the advantages of which I comprehend; but, between you and me, I am afraid that Lucretia will look upon them with a different eye: for, though a young actress, she is so careful of her chastity, that she has already rejected the addresses of two young noblemen, both amiable and rich. You may say, indeed, that these were not kings. True; and, in all probability, the passion of a crowned head will shake the virtue of Lucretia. Nevertheless, I must tell you, that the thing is uncertain, and I declare that I will never force the inclinations of my daughter. If, far from thinking herself honored by the transient affection of the King, she shall regard that honor as infamous, let not that great Prince be disobliged, if she shall conceal herself from him. Return to-morrow, (added she,) and then I will tell you whether you must carry back to him a favorable answer or his jewels."

I did not at all doubt that Laura would exhort Lucretia to swerve from her duty, rather than remain in it, and I depended a good deal on that exhortation. Nevertheless, I learned with surprise next day, that Laura had as much difficulty in swaying her daughter to vice, as other mothers have to form theirs to virtue; and, which is still more surprising, Lucretia, after having granted some private interviews to the monarch, felt so much remorse for having yielded to his desires, that she quitted the world all of a sudden, and shut herself up in the monastery of the Incarnation, where she soon fell sick, and died of grief. Laura, being inconsolable for the loss of her daughter, whose death she upbraided herself with, retired into the convent of the Female Penitents, there to mourn the pleasures of her youth. The King was affected by the unexpected retreat of Lucretia; but, being of a humor not to be long afflicted at any thing, consoled himself by degrees for this accident. As for the Count Duke, although he did not seem very much touched at this incident, it did not fail to give him a great deal of mortification; and this the reader will easily believe.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*Santillane is invited by the minister with a new employment.*

I was also sensibly affected by the misfortune of Lucretia; and felt such remorse for having contributed to it, that, looking upon myself as an infamous wretch, in spite of the quality of the lover whose passion I had served, I resolved to abandon the caduceus for ever. I even expressed to the minister the reluctance I had to bear it, and begged he would employ me in something else. "Santillane, (said he,) I am charmed with thy delicacy; and since thou art a man of such honor, will give thee an occupation more suitable to thy virtue. This it is; listen attentively to what I am going to impart."

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